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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE SELECTION OF ALBERTA COMMUNITY COLLEGE PUBLIC BOARD MEMBERS

by

© SHERRY LORRAINE RAINSFORTH

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND
RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

Spring, 1987

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE SELECTION OF ALBERTA COMMUNITY COLLEGE PUBLIC BOARD MEMBERS submitted by SHERRY LORRAINE RAINSFORTH in partial fulfilment of the requirments for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Supervisor

Date: April 15, 1987

THIS THESIS IS DEDICATED TO
MY BEST FRIEND
MY HUSBAND RANDY

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the process used to select Alberta community college public board members, construct a profile of these individuals and determine how they viewed their selection. Data collection and analysis were accomplished by means of a four-step process. A survey questionnaire was distributed to all Alberta public board members to gather demographic data and information pertaining to board members' views of their selection process. Using a "reputational approach," interviews with elected and appointed government officials, board chairmen and college presidents were conducted to determine the sequential pattern of interaction whereby individuals were appointed to governing boards. Board members in their first term of office, representing four college boards, were interviewed to garner their perceptions relative to their own selection process. Both sets of data were analyzed independently using similar classification schemes. The final stage of data collection involved acquisition of documentation relevant to the study.

By incorporating the elements from three distinct conceptual schemes, a framework termed a dynamic political system or DPS was designed to identify the major parts of the study and to guide the research. The conceptual framework consisted of four major components which were described along with the interactions among them: the environment surrounding the DPS, nomination and selection procedures which took place within the DPS and the products of the DPS termed outputs. This study focused primarily upon the last three components.

The findings and conclusions from the study indicated that the selection process functioned as a dynamic political system. As such, the process was not static but changed over time in an attempt to respond to shifting environmental influences. The lack of prescribed legislation or documentation, official or unofficial, gave the minister considerable latitude with respect to selection proceedings and resulted in the development of implicit procedures and criteria to guide the process. Nomination procedures were relatively open, but selection procedures were held very close to government.

Board members presented a stereotypic demographic profile and possessed considerable knowledge about their personal selection. Advantages of the current selection process focused upon the flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances and the freedom to make decisions on diverse appointments in order to build more balanced boards based upon the needs of individual colleges. Disadvantages centered upon the potential for abuse as the opportunity existed for board appointments to be used exclusively for patronage purposes. Nevertheless, the current selection process was considered to be superior to other forms of selection.

Finally, implications for board selection suggested government design a selection process that recognizes the dynamic nature of the selection process but specifies in general terms what procedures should be adopted and who should participate. Several other implications for practice and suggestions for further research were offered.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Throughout Canada and the United States government has bestowed the responsibility for community college governance upon boards of governors composed largely of public members. While the part they play in institutional governance is deemed integral to the operation of community colleges by both government and scholars, little is known about the process used to select government appointed members. If, as the Carnegie Commission (1973:79) concluded, "the quality of governance depends, in the end, and above all else, on the people who participate in it," then the issue of selection becomes paramount. In Alberta, board members are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. Other than that, the selection process is not well understood. According to Konrad (1977b:147), "'Who makes the selection?' concerns itself not so much with legal provisions, but perhaps far more precisely with how the process functions."

This study examined the process used to select Alberta community college public board members, constructed a profile of these individuals and determined how they viewed their selection.

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

With respect to this study, the concept of governance is considered in a broad sense. The Carnegie Commission (1973:vii) defined governance "as the structures and the processes of decision making." In relation to community colleges, boards of governors are those structures which stand at the apex of the governance process. An essential element of governance and decision making in education is politics (Lutz, 1977:32-33). Based on the work of Easton (1966), Scribner and Englert (1977:22) conceptualized politics

> as the set of interactions that influence and shape the authoritative allocation of values. . . . Every society has a number of valued things that are scarce enough to be the source of potential conflict among its members. To avert chaos, society sets up mechanisms to make decisions (that ~~is,~~ allocations) that members of society will find acceptable (that is, authoritative). Thus, as individuals and groups attempt to influence these authoritative allocations, they are exhibiting . . . political behavior.

Black (1976:30) limits politics more directly to government by defining it as "the process of general decision making at all levels of government by those with legislative and executive power." The process used to select community college public board members is a form of politics as the appointments are a result of decisions made by government officials who possess legislative and executive power. Thus, the concepts of governance and politics are directly related to the focus of the current research.

Community colleges are legal subunits of the provincial government and function as quasi-autonomous institutions (Worth, 1986a:1). They have the legal authority to allocate values such as public funds and educational programs and services for the community. The majority of this allocative authority is vested in boards of governors. When individuals try to influence the authoritative allocation processes of the board, politics occurs. In a similar manner, when government makes decisions with regard to board membership, it is also involved in a political act.

According to Worth (1986a:1), boards of governors, like members of the Legislative Assembly, are examples of a "polyarchal" democracy. Within such a polyarchy, representation is a central element. In this case, representation occurs through appointed board members. Representatives of the public are given the power to decide issues and determine policies (make authoritative allocations of values) on behalf of the community. The appointment of these representatives "is the outcome of a generic political process -- the recruitment of political elites" (Worth, 1986a:2). Recruitment was defined by Cistone (1975:50) "as the process that selects (or allocates) individuals for specific political roles." In this instance, political roles refer to membership on community college boards. Political elites refer to those individuals who have been actively involved in a political party and are viewed by its party leader(s) as making a significant contribution to the party in terms of time and/or funds.

Almond and Powell (1978:108) explained that every political system must have a means of selecting individuals to fill the roles in its political structures. The selection of individuals for elite roles is often based upon previous experience in lesser roles, usually of a political or community based nature. These lesser roles are usually obtained as a result of the interaction between individual ambitions and the structural opportunities available and often constitute the channels through which individuals are recruited to more elite roles. As a result of his work in the area of political elite recruitment, Putnam (1976) found that loyalty and political reliability are used as criteria in the selection of elites in all political systems. According to Almond and Powell, (1978:125), "groups and political party organizations make substantial and continuing efforts to recruit members into their ranks and to mobilize into active participation those who meet their favored criteria." The recruitment of political elites is seen as one means of mobilizing and reinforcing political support by rewarding those who have served the party.

The issue of representation is also a major concern of public board members. As Worth noted (1986a:2), "Every board member, like every other politician who undertakes to represent others, is continually faced with a practical and ethical dilemma: Who do I represent?" Based on the work of Pitkin (1967), Mann (1977:79) identified four ways through which representation occurs. *Formalistic* representation refers to the official authorization to be a representative. *Descriptive* representation is related to the degree to which board members reflect the community from which they have been selected. *Symbolic* representation pertains to the idea that the public identifies with board members in the sense that "he's one of us." It bears no relationship to the actions of the members. *Substantive* representation is defined as "acting in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to them."

Worth (1986a:5) believed that representation by means of the first three forms presents little difficulty for public board members. However, the fourth form gives rise to some problems. By definition, community colleges are considered provincial institutions. As a result, public board members have very broad and ill-defined constituencies. Therefore, the concept of substantive representation presents a confusing paradox. As governors, board members are considered to be representative of the community served by the college, yet the community has no clear boundaries. Consequently, public board members are uncertain as to whom they represent. Representation becomes a difficult issue to deal with during the selection process as well. As Almond and Powell (1978:102) observed, "the operation of both motivation and selection virtually ensures that [board members] will not be representative of the general society."

In Alberta, public community college board members have been appointed by the provincial government since the adoption of the Colleges Act in 1969. These appointments are often perceived by the public to be simply part of the normal political process with little concern given to the issues of representation or expertise. Since a board is designed to serve as a bridge between the college and its community, Konrad (1977a:74-75) pointed out, it should have broad representation. This can be facilitated by the establishment of specific criteria for boardsmanship.

An examination of some work done by Konrad (1976) in the area of college governance in Canada revealed that board members appear to share a considerable degree of uncertainty with respect to their role as college governors. Boards may play a variety of roles, from institutional planners to a court of appeal, but he found that the degree to which they assume these roles varies considerably depending upon the current membership. He emphasized the need not only to clarify the role of board members, but also to alter the selection process in order to improve the consistency and effectiveness of college governance.

A major study conducted by the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) in conjunction with the Carnegie Commission of New York under the auspices of the National Commission on College and University Trustee Selection (1980) produced similar conclusions. The current methods, processes and criteria used in the United States for board member selection in postsecondary institutions were examined. Community college public board members were elected by the local public, appointed by the state government or a combination of the two methods was used. The study concluded that the roles governors played and the resulting effectiveness of governing boards depended to a large extent on the particular people chosen to serve on them. In general, the method used to select board members was closely associated with the political culture of each state.

These studies indicate that the individuals chosen as a result of the selection process have a substantial impact on what occurs in institutions. For instance, as Dennison and Gallagher (1986:180) pointed out, college boards in Alberta possess "final authority in both financial and academic or curricular affairs." Consequently, the selection of board members is of primary importance, yet the process is not well understood. Hence, Frantzreb (1970:6) alleged, the process used to select governors could be the "greatest limiting factor to effective trusteeship." If, as Ingram (1980b:24) maintained, "the lay governing board remains higher education's best hope for coping successfully with the challenges that lie ahead for our colleges," then the process used to select board members deserves closer examination.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions are used. This section includes only the broader, more frequently used terms. Other terms are defined as they are introduced.

Community College

Fenske (1970:20) believed that the key factors in determining what constitutes a community college are the services provided by the institution. For the purposes of this study, the community college is defined using a combination of Thiemann's (1969) definition and the information provided in the Alberta government's "Guidelines for Boards of Governors" (1982). A community college is an institution which provides postsecondary educational opportunities to individuals in a service area by offering a variety of programs ranging from, but not necessarily including, university transfer, general education, vocational-technical, adult and community service, remedial and general service programs. The community college is supported by public funds but is locally controlled.

Boardsmanship

For the purposes of this study, the terms boardsmanship and trusteeship are used synonymously. Greenleaf (1975:30) defined trusteeship as "the holding of a charter of public trust *for* an institution. It represents a function carried out through membership on the governing board of an incorporated institution and is defined by law." Board members are intended to be members of the community served by the college. The terms trusteeship and trustees are used throughout the American literature, with no apparent attempt to designate a style of representation as outlined by Mann (1976:11). In Alberta, boardsmanship, board members and governors are the more common terms.

Eligibility

According to Worth (1986a:2), "Eligibility for board membership is the result of a person's status in . . . the surrounding public community. . . . Among the key determinants of effective opportunity are the individual's motivations, abilities, and political resources -- affiliations, time, occupational success and the like."

Nomination Procedures

Nomination procedures refer to the initial phase of the selection process whereby potential board members are identified for office.

Selection Procedures

Selection procedures refer to the final stage of the selection process whereby one individual is chosen for each board vacancy from the pool of nominees identified during nomination procedures.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study was designed to be an investigation of a vital government process -- the selection of community college public board members. It was considered significant for the following reasons:

First, throughout the literature the part board members play in institutional governance is deemed critical to the operation of community colleges by both government and scholars. Yet, the selection of college governors has received little attention by either group. Herron (1969:70) summarized the issue as follows:

> Governing boards occupy the strategic command posts in higher education. . . . If they are to lay claim to such pivotal positions of power, then higher education must be assured that the most qualified individuals are being selected as trustees.

Given the crucial importance of this position, Gleazer (1985:47) advocated, attention should be directed toward the selection of board members. The current study helped to fill this notable gap in higher education research by documenting and analyzing the process used to select college board members in one Canadian province. While the scope of the research was narrow, useful insights were still gained into the recruitment of political elites in one sector of higher education.

Second, there is no prescribed legislation or documentation, official or unofficial, outlining the process used to select community college board members in Alberta. Konrad (1977b) found that many of the board members involved in his research were concerned about the lack of information about selection procedures and criteria, as well as, the political overtones in relation to the process. This study was intended to document and analyze nomination and selection proceedings and the accompanying criteria in order to contribute to an understanding of the appointment process.

Thirdly, over a decade ago, Konrad (1977b) conducted a study to determine how community college board members in Alberta viewed their selection. Since that time the number of community colleges has increased from six to ten. The volume and diversity of program offerings and student enrolments at the six institutions present at the time of the former study have also increased substantially. In addition, these colleges have gone through a maturation process.

Worth (1975:10), in describing the work of Heron (1972), noted that many formal organizations tended to follow a similar developmental pattern. The organization begins with what he termed a "birth" period characterized by informal staff relationships, relatively unspecialized tasks, goal development and a tolerant environment; followed by a "youth" period where relationships become more formalized, tasks more specialized, the environment more critical and there is a rapid increase in size; then a "productive" period accompanied by stabilization of relationships, limited number of specialized tasks, decreased rate of size and an increased critical environment; and finally a "mature" period characterized by fixed structures and functions, emphasis on broad goals, decentralized decision making, gradual change in size and program and some attainment of control over the environment.

During the past two decades, Alberta community colleges have progressed at varying rates through these phases. The growth and continuing maturity of these institutions may have had some effect on the process used to select board members. This study provided updated material in the Alberta context and afforded the opportunity for comparisons to be made between board members' perceptions of their selection process now and over a decade ago.

Lastly, a conceptual framework was designed specifically for the purposes of this study by incorporating the elements from three distinct conceptual schemes. It presented a unique approach to the recruitment of political elites. This model may prove appropriate for the analysis of other cases and hence, establish a base from which comparative analyses may be conducted.

Thus, as the role of higher education in the past and the expectations of higher education for the future are considered, the quality and expertise of those chosen for boardsmanship become central issues. Add to this the increasing demands for institutional accountability and fiscal stringencies and the intensity of the situation increases accordingly. It becomes apparent that the function of higher education, as it has been known, may well depend upon those selected as board members.

Understanding the nature of the selection process may have an impact, not only on the dynamic higher education setting, but it may also contribute to the understanding of selection procedures in other areas of the social and political enterprise. Overall, the current research assists in the clarification and documentation of a process deemed vital by both government and scholars, yet rarely investigated by either group.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to the Colleges Act (1985), community college public board members in Alberta are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor by an Order in Council. Other than that, very little is known about the selection process. The purpose of this study was to determine how Alberta community college public board member appointments are made and how public board members view the process. While investigating the main problem, answers to the following specific questions were sought:

Nomination Procedures

1. What is the process by which public board members are nominated for board membership?
    - (a) How are board vacancies made known to the public?
    - (b) Where do nominations originate?
    - (c) What procedures are followed in the nomination process?
    - (d) What criteria are used to nominate candidates?

Selection Procedures

2. What is the process by which public board members are selected for board membership?

(a) What procedures are followed in the selection process?

(b) What criteria are used in the selection process?

(c) Who is involved in the selection process?

(d) What is the role of cabinet in the selection process?

(e) Are decision makers required to explain the reasons for their selections? If so, to whom, in what format and to what degree?

Board Member Perceptions

3. How do community college public board members view their selection?

   (a) Who do they believe nominated them for board membership?

   (b) What nomination procedures do they believe were followed?

   (c) What selection procedures do they believe were used?

   (d) What individuals do they believe were involved in their selection?

   (e) What criteria do they believe led to their selection?

Board Member Background Profile

4. What is the demographic profile of current community college public board members in the province of Alberta?

   (a) What community activities were they engaged in prior to their appointment to the board?

   (b) What was the nature of their involvement in party politics?

   (c) What characteristics do they feel are important when selecting governing board members?

Opinions About the Selection Process

5. What opinions do respondents hold with respect to selected aspects of the current selection process?
    - (a) What terms do they believe describe the current selection process?
    - (b) What are the advantages of the current selection process?
    - (c) What are the disadvantages of the current selection process?
    - (d) How could the current selection process be improved?
    - (e) Do they believe there is an attempt to balance boards with respect to age, sex and occupational backgrounds?
    - (f) Do they believe boards to be representative of the community the college serves?
    - (g) Are they satisfied with the current selection process?
    - (h) What do they believe will happen to the current selection process in the next ten years?

LIMITATIONS, DELIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The following section presents some of the limitations, delimitations, and assumptions of this study.

Limitations

The following limitations were acknowledged:

1. Data collected from questionnaires were limited to information which the respondents could recall or had available. In addition, questionnaire items or instructions may have been misunderstood or misinterpreted.

2. The internal validity of the data was limited due to a number of factors: the

accessibility of key actors and their willingness to discuss the issue; the accuracy of the perceptions and experiences of those involved in the interviews, for each individual has a unique interpretation of reality and; the accessibility of internal documents and the degree to which they accurately reflected reality. Data collection was ultimately dependent upon integrity of the responses of those surveyed and interviewed.

3. The choice of geographic location limited the external validity or generalizability to other provinces.

4. The researcher may have "unwittingly" influenced the respondents or biased the study by "selective understanding and recording of answers" (Oppenheim, 1966:31). The subjectivity involved in the interpretation and analysis of data was recognized.

Delimitations

The following delimitations were imposed:

1. This study was delimited to public board members serving community colleges in the province of Alberta.

2. No attempt was made to examine the role and functioning of college boards; this study was delimited to an examination of the process used to select public board members.

3. Due to cost, time and accessibility constraints, the number of board members interviewed were delimited to those in their first term of office from four Alberta community colleges. Two colleges were selected from the southern part of the province and two from the northern portion. Two of these institutions were located in major population centres and two in less populated communities. While an attempt was made to select colleges from different geographic regions serving various sized communities, no attempt was made to determine if these institutions were a representative sample of the ten community colleges in Alberta.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made in conducting the study:

1. The appointment of board members was an important process that had occurred since the inception of the Colleges Act (1969) in Alberta.

2. The selection process was a sufficiently open process that could be studied and described through surveys, interviews, and document analysis. In other words, it is assumed that the process was not secretive.

3. The information provided by respondents by means of the questionnaire was accurate.

4. The key actors could and would accurately recall and describe various aspects of the selection process, that is, their perceptions were trustworthy.

5. The perceptions of the researcher in describing and analyzing the results of the study were trustworthy.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

This chapter provided an introduction and overview of the context of the study, definition of terms, statement of the problem and the limitations, delimitations and assumptions. Chapter 2 reviews the general literature and specific research studies related to board member selection. Chapter 3 presents the methodology adopted for the study and describes the conceptual framework designed to guide the collection and analysis of data.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present the analyses of the three phases of data collection including interviews with elected and appointed officials, board member survey questionnaire and board member interviews, respectively. A synthesis of these analyses and discussion of the findings are provided in Chapter 7 in an effort to afford an interpretation of the entire process.

Finally, Chapter 8 summarizes the study and provides conclusions with respect to the overall selection process. This chapter concludes with some reflections about the utility of the conceptual framework or DPS model, a discussion of the implications of this research for theory and practice and suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

The importance of lay boards in the governance of institutions of higher education is echoed throughout the literature. The Carnegie Commission (1973:32) advocated that the board was the best governance structure available, superior to government, faculty, students or any combination thereof. They cited the growth in quality and quantity of institutions, the diversity and the adaptability of the postsecondary system to changing conditions, and its relative independence from governmental domination as major evidence of the vital nature of the board in the governance of colleges and universities. Dumke (1980:3) summarized the situation as follows:

> America has made many contributions to higher education, but none more important or far-reaching than the idea of having a group of interested lay citizens assume authority over the academy and act as a buffer between it and society.

"Despite its imperfections and occasional misuses," Ingram (1980b:24) added, "the lay governing board remains higher education's best hope for coping successfully with the problems that lie ahead for our colleges and universities."

The purpose of this chapter is to examine selected literature and research which addresses the subject of governing boards in postsecondary institutions. It consists of a discussion of the concept of lay boards, the issue of representation, the selection of board members, in particular, the issue of election versus appointment, the roles of board members, the issue of accountability, the future of governing boards; and finally, it summarizes the research related to the current study. An attempt is made to focus on the community college, but as Bensimon (1984) revealed following an ERIC search, the community college is rarely the centre of interest in regard to the study of governance in higher education. It is usually ignored or simply treated in a peripheral manner.

AN OVERVIEW OF GOVERNING BOARDS

This section presents an overview of selected information related to postsecondary governing boards in Canada and the United States.

The Concept of Lay Boards

According to Bailey (1982:25) the "system of lay governing boards serving as buffers between government agencies and the life of colleges and universities is virtually unique in the entire world." The concept of lay boards, Rauh (1969:1) related, "undoubtedly had its origins in the transition of the control of Harvard University from the founding clergy to the merchants who succeeded them." At its inception, the term "lay" boards referred to individuals who were not professional educators. However, Rauh (1969:1) cautioned against the unqualified use of the term "as it is no longer clear who is and who is not a layman." To overcome semantic difficulties, the term "layman" has recently been used interchangeably with the terms trustee, governor and public board member.

The importance attributed to the lay trusteeship evolved from two closely related underlying principles that were prevalent in society from the dawn of the history of American higher education. Zwingle (1980:15) summarized these as follows:

> (1) An unchecked monopoly is a threat to the public good. . . . For education, monopoly of power is especially threatening, whether that power be vested in church or state or in any one individual. . . .
> (2) Education is too important to the public interest for the public to rely totally for its governance on the faculty, whose self-interest, as with any professional group, is ever present.

To alleviate these concerns American higher education attached a great deal of importance to the public's involvement in institutional governance. Thus, Russock (1974:57) concluded, the lay board of governance became a reality and the essential nature of the trusteeship remains to this day.

Sykes (1970:1) contended that the "'concept of the lay board that represents the people [was] a major pillar in America's representative democracy and [was] the essence of that nation's belief in separation of powers.'" Clark (1961:85) succinctly defined a lay board as "'an instrument of external control . . . by persons who are part-time and amateur rather than full-time and expert.'" The people on these boards, Slover (1982:18) explained, viewed themselves as protecting the community's investment in the institution and thereby protecting the public interest and representing the public's "trust," hence, the term "trusteeship."

The power and authority of the trusteeship was bestowed upon the board by the state government. According to Rauh (1969:2), trustees not only held the assets of the institution in trust, but they also possessed the full power to manage the institution. Epstein (1974:68) noted that the board represented a combination of public authority and quasi-independence. It exercised its authority on behalf of the people of the state, but it was not directly responsive to the will of the people.

Thus, from the beginning of American higher education a governing board has participated in the governance of institutions of higher education. The first two American colleges, Harvard (1636) and William and Mary (1693), not only had internal governing councils composed of the president and faculty, but they also had external supervisory boards. Yale (1701), Duryea (1984:123) explained, actually set the precedent for the country by establishing an external nonacademic board as its sole agent of control for institutional affairs. Paltridge, Hurst and Morgan (1973:2) added that the Land Grant Act (1864), which established the public state colleges and universities, was responsible for boards becoming more representative of the public at large. From that time, Nason (1982:4) contended, control of postsecondary institutions has oscillated between strong presidents, determined faculty and dedicated trustees who hold the legal authority to govern.

Membership and Representation

Directly related to a discussion of governing boards is the question of whether or not all members should be lay citizens. While the need for faculty and student representation on postsecondary governing boards has been an issue for some time, according to Dennison and Gallagher (1986:180),

> there is little to document the advantages and disadvantages of such involvement. In provinces where wide representation occurs, supportive arguments have rested on the issues of power-sharing, democracy in decision-making, and the values of broadly based consultation. Conversely, in provinces where board membership is confined to lay appointees, issues relating to conflict of interest have dominated arguments against such representation.

Similarly, the Carnegie Commission (1984:179) opposed faculty and students serving on boards of their own institutions due to conflict of interest concerns, but they recognized the value of participative decision making and recommended they serve on board committees.

In the United States, Paltridge et al. (1973:17) reported, the vast majority of trustees were lay people. Only twelve percent of the boards had voting institutional members, that is, the president, faculty or student representatives.

In Canada, the situation is quite different. While the majority of the governors are lay citizens, Konrad (1980:97-98) noted, most boards include the president and approximately fifty percent have faculty and student members. Quebec and Alberta colleges and one British Columbia institute include nonacademic staff members as well. Thus, in both countries, the trend appears to be away from strictly lay membership to the inclusion of institutional representatives for, as Konrad (1980:99) related, they are seen as a communicaton link to the other members of the institution.

Nason (1982:5) summarized the general consensus in the literature regarding demographic characteristics of the lay membership of American community college boards: "white, anglo-saxon, protestant, male, well-to-do business and professional men, over 50 in age -- in short, the 'establishment' with all its basic conservatism." Following a review of the literature, Zwemer (1985:105) found that other studies conducted in the area of trustee characterisics tended to support these findings. As a result, Zwingle and Mayville (1974:20) described governing boards as a closed society, made up of individuals of similar age and background, out of touch with the needs of the college and the public they were designed to serve. They felt boards could only be legitimate in so far as their membership included proportional representation from the various sectors of the community. Conversely, Zoglin (1976:54) reported, "what matters to [trustees'] constituents is how they [trustees] feel about community college matters, not where they go to church or what income tax bracket they are in." She found no conclusive evidence with respect to the relationship between trustee background and performance.

The scope of representation, Konrad (1977a:74) explained, affects the "board's ability to assess the spectrum of society's views and the manner in which it interprets the college's programs." The community college board of governors, Frantzreb (1981:30) pointed out, "is expected to be responsive to the educational needs of society in general, the local geographical area, and the institution itself. . . ." "This is the precise reason to have trustees," Morgan (1983:32) asserted, "to represent society and to translate its needs into a set of realistic plans for a college to then struggle to achieve." In order to accomplish this feat, Nason (1982:57) continued, a wide variety of people with diverse experiences, talents, and attitudes are required. In a similar fashion, Kohn and Mortimer

(1983:35) identified the effective board as being composed of members from both genders, a broad spectrum of ages, backgrounds and occupations.

Following a review of the literature, Fistler (1982:27) found that "it is generally acknowledged by scholars that a diversity of board membership, with a broader base in occupation, in age, and in ideas, adds strength to the board and enhances its legitimacy." All members, Zwingle (1980:24) added, must represent the general interest of the community and not represent any special interest group. The board represents what Erickson (1969:8) called a "microcosm" of the larger community. Thus, according to Gale (1980:51), the issue of representation or board balance should be viewed from two separate dimensions -- first, characteristics such as age, gender, and geographic background and then, individual talents or occupational backgrounds required by a particular board in order to fulfill institutional needs.

The Selection of Public Board Members

One way to alleviate representational concerns, Fistler (1982:27) suggested, may be tied to the type of selection process used by government. In Canada, Konrad (1977b:141) reported, most community college public board members are appointed by the provincial government upon nomination usually from a local member of the Legislative Assembly or another prominent public figure. Alternatively, in the United States, public trustees are either elected by the local public or appointed by the government. According to Nason (1982:64), often a combination of the two methods is used with the majority of members elected locally and the remainder appointed by the governor or by a local authority.

Election versus appointment. In both countries, discussions related to board member selection have focused on the issue of appointment versus election. Supporters of the election mode, Slover (1982:8) related, believe it to be the best means of ensuring that governing boards will be responsible to the public, that is, they view election as more democratic. Elections, Rauh (1969:186) contended, also keep control of the institution closer to the community. In other words, Polk, Lacombe and Goddard (1976:19) asserted, the "voter receives the benefit of more direct control over the elected trustee." In turn, Potter (1976:6) continued, elected trustees have more influence on elected legislators because they also represent people and votes. Kohn and Mortimer (1983:33) also found that proponents of popular election believed that elected trustees "can be more vigorous in protecting the institution from improper political intrusion by the legislative and executive branches of the state government."

On the other hand, Slover (1982:7) pointed out, proponents of the appointment method argue that it provides greater opportunity for the selection of "qualified" individuals relatively free from political campaigning. Elections, Nason (1982:64) asserted, "tend to make trustees adopt party line politics or take a 'reform-the-institution' platform that is inconsistent with trustee impartiality." Trustee selection, Gale (1980:48) advocated, should be primarily influenced by "the mission, direction, and needs of the institution." Appointment by government officials, Pray (1975) believed, would result not only in better qualified people, but would also provide for a better opportunity to balance trustee talents and institutional needs. Candidates could be screened to determine the compatibility of their talents with the needs of the institution. Nason (1982:64) agreed that local screening of candidates may improve the quality of trustees selected. The National Commission on College and University Trustee Selection (1980:37) summarized the issue as follows: "Board autonomy, balance and diversity, [and] trustee commitment . . . can be better assessed and/or achieved through appointment from a list of highly qualified nominees."

In addition, Pray (1975) suggested the incorporation of a citizen's panel for nominating candidates to appointive authorities, for nonpartisan citizens' panels could perform the same function with respect to the electorate of the community. In this way, Heilbron (1973:10) indicated, "democratic controls can be sufficiently safeguarded through the appointment process."

Appointment overcomes other disadvantages attributed to election. In a study conducted by Konrad (1977b:143) community college board members in Alberta identified three major areas of contention in regard to elections: identification of constituents, unwarranted cost of election campaigns, and quality of candidates in regard to service motive. In a study comparing the governing effectiveness of appointed and elected boards in Wisconsin, Ladwig (1981) found that respondents working under appointed trustees felt the trustees were extremely effective in regard to qualifications and experience, the same areas in which respondents working under elected boards rated low.

Running for elections, Tendler and Wilson (1979:4) pointed out, also takes considerable time and money and these requirements preclude most people from considering membership. According to Heilbron (1973:10), this poses additional problems as

> those who would run for office would be likely to reflect the positions of whatever organizations provided the funds for their candidacies. . . . It would be impossible to expect that such trustees would achieve the desired balance of commitment and representation.

Yet, he was not concerned about the appointed trustee being beholden to the official who made the appointment.

> After a few years, the trustee becomes immersed in the problems of the institution which it is his duty to govern. If he does not have to be concerned about being reappointed, he tends to take an independent position even against the governor who may have appointed him (Heilbron, 1973:9).

Thus, Polk et al. (1976:18) summarized, "there is a better chance of getting a person concerned with the public interest through appointment, because the elected trustee is considered more open to political pressure from interest groups."

However, they (Polk et al., 1976:15) cautioned, it does not matter whether a board is appointed or elected, the selection of board members is still a political act which, Moore (1973:172) added, results in a political board of trustees. As Zoglin (1976:33) commented,

> it should be evident now that we are leaving the Real World behind and entering into the Never-Never Land of politics. Fortunately the day is past when everyone piously declared that 'politics and education don't mix'. . . . Since politics is the way in which people (the community) choose and control those who manage their institutions (the colleges), it would be a real tragedy if a way were found to keep politics out of the community colleges.

Konrad (1977a:73) agreed that, "politically, a board exercises independence that is vital to the freedom of an institution." Thus, higher education, Kohn and Mortimer (1983:35) concluded, "is already part and parcel of the political environment. . . ."

In conclusion, while there are positive and negative aspects to both board member election and appointment, a review of the literature indicated that appointment is clearly preferred by the majority of scholars and practitioners. As Nason (1974) advocated, "if the ideal is to keep politics to a minimum, then popular election . . . would seem the least desirable method." Appointment appears to provide the best means of establishing a board that is capable of dealing with institutional needs, yet is also representative of the community it serves.

The Alberta scene. In Alberta, both elective and appointive modes have played a role in community college governance. According to the First Annual Report of the Alberta Colleges Commission (1970), public colleges in Alberta were established as a result of the efforts of local school boards and interested citizens of the community. They were originally operated, under the Public Junior Colleges Act of 1958, by a board composed of elected trustees representing the local sponsoring school districts. With the introduction of the Colleges Act in 1969, public colleges were put "under the direct administrative control of boards of governors appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council" (Alberta Colleges Commission, 1970:18). The majority of the board members selected were considered to be "lay" citizens or those not directly affiliated with the institution governed by a particular board. The appointment method of board member selection has continued to this day. Current membership of Alberta college boards is composed of seven lay members and four institutional members including the president, non-academic staff, academic staff and student representatives.

Roles and Responsibilities

While the selection process has received the least attention in the literature related to governing boards, the roles and responsibilities of board members has been discussed the most frequently. Following the lead of Nason (1982), Zwingle (1979), and Konrad (1976), the terms roles and responsibilities will be used interchangeably for the purposes of this study. Listed as the top priority is what Nason (1982:19) referred to as "maintaining the integrity of the trust," that is, protecting the community's investment in the institution. While it is recognized that the roles and responsibilities of boards may vary due to size, program emphasis and geographic location, the conventional roles and responsibilities of boardsmanship are relatively consistent throughout the literature. The following list is a combination of the items provided by the Alberta "Guidelines for Board of Governors" (1982:25-30), Nason (1982: 19-51), Potter (1976:1-9), the Carnegie Commission (1973:32-33), and Rauh (1969:9):

1. To maintain the trust of the institution.
2. To select and appoint the president.
3. To monitor the performance of the president and the administration.
4. To audit and review institutional operations.
5. To determine the mission and establish institutional policy.

6. To approve short and long-range plans.
7. To approve educational programs.
8. To insure financial solvency.
9. To preserve institutional autonomy.
10. To enhance the public standing of the institution.
11. To serve as a court of final appeal.
12. To serve as a bridge between the community and the institution and a buffer between the government and the institution.
13. To create a climate for and to stimulate change.
14. To assess their own performance.

While there is little argument in the literature regarding the general overall roles and responsibilties of governors, the specific roles board members tended to emphasize differed substantially. In an attempt to clarify the confusion often experienced by governors in relation to role perceptions, Konrad (1976) conducted a survey of Canadian community college board members to ascertain how they perceived their involvement in their respective institutions. The majority of the time they spent on colleges matters appeared to be related to various meetings which included the full board, administration, government representatives, *ad hoc* campus groups and politicians. The only area in which they considered themselves directly involved in the decision making process was in the area of institutional control. Other than that, they regarded their involvement as *pro forma* .

Paltridge et al. (1973) obtained similar results to the Konrad (1976) research when they conducted an intensive study of nineteen college boards in the United States to discern their decision patterns. Though trustees were involved extensively in making decisions, most of these consisted of the *pro forma* type in relation to operational matters. Both studies indicated that there was a distinct lack of direct involvement by board members in decisions pertaining to most college matters.

Thus, while there may be consensus as to the roles and responsibilities governors should or do have, as indicated by the literature, in reality, the degree to which these are put into practice is questionable at best. Nevertheless, Konrad (1980:103) asserted, the responsibility for rectifying the situation lies with board members themselves. The implementation of evaluation procedures by boards may assist college governors in determining the part they currently play in the functioning of the institution and from that information plan the role they would like to play. Morgan (1983:33) agreed, "boards must come to know not only what is expected of them but invite measures of how well they are doing it." Many of the difficulties associated with role ambiguity, Zwingle and Mayville (1974:9) pointed out, emanate "from a failure [of trustees] to make known internally and externally what role [or roles] the board has chosen for itself."

Accountability

Regardless of the roles played, boards are faced with the issue of accountability. Roueche, Baker and Brownell (1971:8) chose to define the term broadly:

> Accountability implies that . . . colleges must be accountable externally to the community and that colleges must be accountable internally to the students who pass through their open doors. This state is achieved when students from the community enter the college, find a program that is compatible with their goals, persist in college until the goal is reached, and then become productive members of the community.

Thus, accountability permeates the entire college community from the board of governors to the faculty.

More recently, the term has become associated with what Ingram (1980b) referred to as the cost-effective use of resources. External demands, he explained, from government and other agencies have forced boards to assume "a more active role in deciding how to budget their increasingly limited funds and in weighing the consequences of faulty decisions" (p. 24). Similarly, Zwingle and Mayville (1974:1) reported, "the term accountability has come to stand for the application of cost-effectiveness techniques. . . ." In order to keep their communities informed as to the institution's financial viability, trustees have developed "accountability procedures." The purpose of this approach is to enable boards to closely monitor "how their money is being spent, and to determine where it could be spent more effectively to yield the greatest institutional dividends" (p. 1).

Chippendale (1979) encompassed both the student and fiscal concerns by arguing that the term accountability incorporated both effectiveness and efficiency. It refers, he stated, to "the responsibility to demonstrate that an organization has achieved certain ends [educated students], and responsibility to demonstrate that it has employed the most efficient means [cost-effectiveness] in achieving these ends" (p. 18). However, regardless of the manner in which the term is defined, ultimately, Gleazer (1985:41) contended, it is the community college board that is held "accountable for all aspects of the college's operations."

The Future of Governing Boards

While the roles and responsibilities of governing boards appear extensive and the authority vested in them "supreme," there has currently been much discussion regarding the future of boardsmanship. Due to recent fiscal restraint policies and the emphasis on accountability, the role of governing boards has received increased attention by both government and scholars. In the United States, Dumke (1980:4) asserted, the governing board "is being eroded, to the extent that within the next generation it will probably no longer exist, at least in its present form." He cited several reasons to support his contention -- the growth of the state and federal governments, the problems of both governments in managing the economy, the lack of perception on the part of board members, and the changing philosophy of society in general. In Canada, Konrad (1980:96) maintained, there appeared to be similar pressures for the redefinition of college boards:

> Studies of provincial systems of postsecondary education during the past decade or so clearly indicate a change in the balance between institutional authority and governmental control. Trustees find themselves in the midst of this turmoil. As the trend toward centralization and as greater demands for participation on governance are made by both faculty and students, the composition of boards of trustees and their roles require closer examination and possible redefinition.

In a study of governing boards in British Columbia, Dennison and Harris (1984:27) concluded that due to the move toward greater centralization of the college and institute system in that province, the role of board members will definitely change. However, they were unsure of the direction of the change. Boards could become more powerful if they are used by the minister as the major source and channel of advice on college operations. This perspective could be bolstered by an anticipated increase in attempts by boards to protect the individuality of their colleges. On the other hand, with the government assuming greater authority with respect to college governance, the role of the board could be downplayed and the impact of its decisions minimized. The actual direction of the power shift is yet to be seen.

While, without question, the roles and responsibilities of college board members are in a state of flux, the next query centres upon the impact of such changes on the college community as a whole.

RESEARCH STUDIES RELATED TO THE CURRENT RESEARCH

Research studies conducted in the area of college boards are very limited. As Bensimon (1984:54) revealed, following an ERIC search, the community college is rarely the focus of attention with regard to the study of governance in higher education.

More specifically, as a result of their independent literature searches, both Russock (1974:57) and Thompson (1979:30) found few research studies associated with community college boards of governors. In Canada, Dennison and Harris (1986:16) added, limited research has been done in relation to any kind of higher education institutional boards. In particular, Kohn and Mortimer (1983:30) reported, the area of board member selection has also received little attention in any area of higher education. Discussions in the literature on selection, Zwemer (1985:104) added, focused primarily on the issue of appointment versus election of trustees.

The following sections outline studies judged to be more relevant to the current research.

The Hartnett (1969) Study

In 1967 the Educational Testing Service commissioned a study of college and university trustees under the direction of Hartnett, in collaboration with Rauh. A questionnaire was developed to ascertain the backgrounds, roles and educational attitudes of a random sample of over 10 000 trustees associated with American colleges and universities. A fifty-three percent response rate was obtained. The major conclusions were descriptive in nature and included the following: the "'typical' trustee can be described as white, male, in his late 50's, well educated and financially very successful;" while trustees generally preferred "a modified 'top-down'" type of institutional government, they also preferred that administrators make decisions related to matters other than selection of the president, financial, physical plant and "external affairs;" trustees are generally conservative in terms of attitudes about higher education, political party affiliation and ideology; and trustees do not read those books and journals deemed relevant to higher education. The researcher raised several research questions as a result of this study, ranging from examining the relationship between trustee occupation and educational attitudes to determining the changes that have occurred over the years in the role of trustees in the field of higher education.

The Paltridge, Hurst and Morgan (1973) Study

The purpose of the Paltridge et al. (1973:iii) research was to discern "the matters to which boards address themselves and to analyze the degree and detail of attention devoted to various types of decisions in a broad array of subject classifications." The sample included nineteen boards of American four-year public institutes of higher education. A "nonreactive data-gathering technique" was utilized. "The key operational step . . . [included] the coding . . . of more than 7000 individual trustee board actions from content analyses of the official board records of over 100 meetings by 20 trustee boards" (p. iii). The most significant finding identified boards as making a large number of decisions, however, most of these were *pro forma* actions related to operational concerns.

> The responsibility for legislative policy formation, long-term planning, administrative guidance, review of performance and support of the institution as it faces hostile critics from within and without the campus are frequently given minor attention or left to the initiative of administrators or governmental agencies (p. v).

In relation to the selection of trustees of public institutions, most board members were either appointed solely by the governor or in conjunction with the state legislature. Suggestions for future research included ascertaining the differences in how decisions are made between boards composed of all lay members, those which include a high percentage of ex-officio members, and elected versus appointed boards.

The Konrad (1976) Study

The Konrad (1976) study focused on the board members of Alberta and British

Columbia community colleges and English-speaking colleges d'enseignement general et professional (CEGEPs) in Quebec. A questionnaire was developed to "provide a profile of governing board members with respect to their backgrounds, role perceptions, and educational attitudes" (p. 1). A sixty-three percent response rate was obtained from the 219 board members included in the sample. The results of the study were discussed in two separate articles.

The first publication (Konrad, 1976) was concerned with only those matters related to role performance and preference. Two major conclusions were drawn as a result of the research:

1. "'What is the role of community college trustees?' is not so much a question as an issue" (p. 5). Board members perceived most of their activities to be *pro forma* in nature, which indicated the need for role definition and clarification.

2. "Board reform lies in the hands of trustees" (p. 5). The study found that college governors often chose to be excluded from major policy issues and instead opted to be involved in operational matters. In addition, board members roles differed by province and type of selection procedure used. Thus, a question identified for further research concerned the relationship between board member roles and board composition.

The second article (Konrad, 1977a) discussed the background of board members. "Although a descriptive study, the data were analyzed statistically to determine whether observed variations could be related to the province and the method of trustee selection" (p. 66). The findings of the study were summarized into a number of generalizations that formed a profile of Canadian community college board members. A "typical" board was described as male, middle forties, highly educated, member of a profession, financially well-off, long-time resident of the province and a member of the political party currently in office in the province. Board members favoured their current selection procedures and supported faculty and student membership on boards. They opposed nomination structures centred in government favouring a decentralized appointment procedure. Personal qualities such as interest and time were considered to be the most important characteristics in board member selections.

Several implications for college governance were drawn by Konrad (1977a) from the research. Political independence of the community college governing board was seen to be adversely affected by short terms in office, use of governmental nominating methods, and membership which resulted from association with other organizations such as local school boards. Board effectiveness was considered to be curtailed by the lack of representation, short terms of office, rapid board member turnover, lack of postsecondary experience by board members, as well as, a lack of understanding of the college and its mission. Suggestions to improve board effectiveness and representativeness included carefully designing a selection process which established specific criteria for the selection of board members.

The Konrad (1977b) Study

This study was undertaken to examine the procedure used to select Alberta community college board members by interviewing thirty-five newly appointed board members and ascertaining how they viewed the process. College presidents serve by virtue of their position and thus, were excluded from the study. The results of the research were summarized according to eight general questions that had been used as a guide during data collection.

The vast majority of board members, it was found, had been extensively involved in community activities ranging from school boards to church organizations. While none of the governors interviewed had held elected governmental office, the majority had been involved to some degree in the various political parties. Both institutional and lay board members expressed concern with respect to the issue of political patronage. Most of the respondents did not know how they had been nominated or appointed. They were unaware of the criteria used and the procedures involved in board member selection. However, most governors were satisfied with their selection and supported the appointment method. Elections, they felt, would reduce the quality of candidates. However, concerns were expressed with regard to delays by government in filling vacancies.

The majority of board members responded favourably to faculty and student membership on boards, but few respondents believed presidents should be board members. Most viewed their membership as a "conflict of interest." There was also dissatisfaction expressed with regard to the appointment of board chairpersons by government. The majority of governors thought boards should either be consulted prior to the appointment or be given sole responsibility for selecting their leader.

Several suggestions offered by respondents to improve the process used to select board members were summarized. These included: creating a nonpolitical selection committee, providing information regarding the procedures and criteria used for nomination and appointment of board members, involving current governors in the selection of new members and the board chairperson, increasing the number of institutional representatives and improving orientation for new members.

The Thompson (1979) Study

This study was conducted to determine what relationships existed between elected and gubernatorially appointed community college board members in regard to their characteristics and opinions about selected community college issues. The population included a stratified cluster sample of 646 elected and appointed trustees representing twelve and five states, respectively. Data collection was conducted by means of a survey questionnaire. A response rate of seventy-one percent was obtained.

Statistically significant differences were found between a number of factors. Appointed boards, on the average, were younger, had more women and minority members, served shorter terms and held fewer meetings. Both groups were dominated by middle-aged caucasian males who had earned at least a bachelor's degree, were financially well-to-do and classified themselves as politically "moderate."

The major implication drawn from the study centred around the issue of descriptive representation. Groups such as "women, young adults, non-caucasian, less well-educated, or low-income groups, and those in non-professional occupations were not well represented by either the elected or the appointed" boards (p. 323). While the boards were believed to be confronted with the responsibility of representing diverse segments of society and determining their educational needs, they were composed of individuals with similar backgrounds and experiences. Thus, Thompson (1979) suggested that further research be conducted to determine the representativeness of community college boards.

The National Commission on College and University Trustee Selection (1980)

The Association of Governing Boards (AGB), in conjunction with the Carnegie Corporation of New York, conducted a major study, under the auspices of the National Commission on College and University Trustee Selection (1980), involving the procedures used in the selection of trustees of American public institutions of higher education. The purpose of the study was to form recommendations on how to improve the selection of trustees in American colleges and universities. Trustees, legislators, presidents, and private citizens formed the twelve-person commission "which served as the guiding force for this project" (p. 9). The current methods, processes and criteria for trustee selection were categorized and analyzed. An advisory task force representing organizations in the public sector assisted "in clarifying issues and in reviewing recommendations" (p. 9).

The most common method of selection for publically supported colleges and universities was gubernatorial appointment, followed by local elections. Appointment and election were both found to be tied to local political traditions. On several occasions, trustee selection was found to be vulnerable to state and local political forces. Kohn and Mortimer (1983:32), in describing the results of the study, referred to the appointment of trustees in public institutions "as a fight over the 'three p's': prestige, politics, and power." No evidence was found to support the contention that the descriptive representativeness or diversity of board membership was associated with the type of selection method. However, appointment was considered to be the preferable selection method due to the opportunity to screen prospective candidates in relation to institutional and board needs.

Several other conclusions were drawn from the study. Board diversity was considered to be a major issue as boards were found to be largely composed of middle-aged, well-educated, professional, white males. The strongest argument against institutional membership rested with the concern that they would represent specific groups rather than the public welfare. There was not considered to be an "optimum" board size. However, as fund raising becomes a larger issue in public institutions, it was felt that an increase in board size might be necessary to handle the extra work. In order to enhance board legitimacy, financial disclosure by trustees was seen as a means to identify potential conflict of interest situations. In addition, throughout the report, the lack of attention in the literature to trustee selection and orientation was stressed. Eighteen recommendations for improving selection proceedings were formed including: nominating committees be appointed by the governor to suggest candidates, qualified candidates be carefully screened, trustees be appointed by the governor from a list of nominees and political affiliation not be a criterion for appointment.

The Fistler (1982) Study

The purpose of this study was to describe the process used to select and the nature of the involvement of trustees at two private American liberal arts colleges. Based on characteristics, such as enrolment and degree granting status, that depicted them as "typical" private liberal arts institutions, two colleges were chosen for the research. Methodology included a descriptive case study approach with no attempt at evaluative comparisons. Data were collected by personal interviews with the two presidents, telephone interviews with forty-nine trustees, and document analysis including annual reports, bylaws and college catalogs.

The results of the research depicted trustees as middle-aged, well-educated, well-to-do males who were members of the sponsoring denomination and had served on that board for approximately six years. Over eighty percent of trustees regularly attended board meetings. The major form of selection was termed co-optation as existing trustees chose new members. None of the respondents was seeking a position on the board and most of them termed the selection process as "personalized" and their selection as an honour. Perceptions of selection criteria and orientation procedures differed among respondents. The institutional bylaws contained few guidelines or criteria for trustee selection resulting in what was termed an informal, unsystematic process. Individual boards determined the specific characteristics they sought in board members and the degree of representation they needed. The president was seen as a major actor in the selection of new board members. Board members viewed the board as "balanced" with committee assignments matched to their expertise and interests. The nature of trustee involvement in board activities varied considerably depending upon such things as personal initiative, time and board organization.

Recommendations for further research included the need for more "descriptive evidence of actual selection procedures and trustee activities" (p.163), as well as, the need for information pertaining to the adjustment process for new trustees, the activities of board members in relation to board size and how board activities are related to the leadership of the chairperson and the president.

The Slover (1982) Study

This study examined the perceptions of 140 board chairpersons in relation to their role and function as board members, the adequacy of the information they receive from the president in order to fulfill their role, and the objectives, organization, functions and service of the board. A survey questionnaire was used to collect data from the chairpersons "of all member institutions of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges" (p. 1). There was a seventy-six percent response rate.

The review of the literature relative to the role and function of lay governing boards indicated that lay boards are affected by societal change, faculty participation in governance, geographical influence, government, the selection process, and by the composition of the board itself.

The major findings of the study regarding the perceptions of the chairpersons are summarized as follows: The majority of chairpersons believed their boards were involved in the development of the mission statement of the institution, enrolment and physical facilities planning, the review and approval of the budget, the defence of the institution's internal affairs from intrusions and a recent review of board procedures and bylaws. In addition, they reported that they had a positive relationship with the president, effective two-way communication with the faculty and students, had the confidence of the public and a good working relationship with government and afforded sufficient opportunity for rotating leadership within the board itself. They felt their boards were effective and had sufficient knowledge of the institution to assess the value of innovative ideas and practices. On the other hand, they did not believe their boards were involved in details relating to the physical plant, emergency and conflict situations and educational matters that were delegated to the faculty or the implementation of educational policies. These were deemed the jurisdiction of administration.

On the basis of this information, thirty-four recommendations were made to governing boards. Suggestions for future research included ascertaining presidents' views on the role and function of boards and studying the three major groups, state-wide, multi-campus and separate governing boards, individually.

The Dennison and Harris (1984) Study

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the views of board members in the British Columbia college and institute system toward issues related to curriculum content and priorities, the role and composition of governing boards and the provincial governance structure. A questionnaire was used to collect data from 230 college and institute board members in the province. A sixty-five percent response rate was obtained.

Until recently, half of the respondents were appointed by cooperating school boards and the remainder were selected by government. Over half of the respondents possessed previous board experience and had served three or more years on their respective boards.

In relation to educational programs, governors supported the current diversity in college programming, as well as, the specialized nature of institute offerings. With respect to the role of boards, respondents ranked activities related to policy making, planning, budgeting, setting of tuition fees and administrative evaluations the highest. The majority of respondents did not favour public elections. However, school board appointees were more inclined toward the elective mode than were government appointees. Continuing lay and community involvement in the board system were stressed. There was strong support for government, school board and public representation on boards, but little support for institutional membership.

Responses to extra-institutional governance issues indicated that almost half of the governors favoured a single ministry of education for all sectors of education, although a substantial minority preferred a separate ministry of advanced education. There was little support for the governance structure used at the time of the study in which government assigned colleges and institutes to the same ministry as public schools, but isolated universities, and gave "three quasi-independent intermediary bodies called Councils" the responsibility to allocate funds.

The major conclusion drawn from this research indicates that board members "tend to reject strong centralization" of the college and institute system. As Dennison and Harris (1984:30) concluded:

> A perceptible theme which underlies the response patterns to the many issues addressed in this study . . . is the intention of college board members to preserve the values which have long characterized the colleges in British Columbia, as essentially comprehensive, community based institutions, broadly accessible and lay governed. . . . There is a perceived role for a centralized authority . . . but it is a role to be shared with institutional boards.

The Pitman (1986) Study

This study was initiated by the Ontario provincial government for the purpose of assessing the current governance structure of Ontario's college system. Data were collected by an appointed ministerial advisor using "an informal process of broad consultation" with hundreds of people within the college system, including members of the council of regents, boards of governors, college presidents, administrators, faculty, support staff and students. In addition, individuals in the private sectors who were identified as interested in the colleges and the quality of education were also consulted.

The major focus of the study was upon the need for a new mandate for the governance of the twenty-two colleges of applied arts and technology.

> If the colleges are to be seen solely as community colleges, then there seems to be little point to any provincial structure. On the other hand, if the colleges are really a provincial manpower supply system, then there seems to be little point to having local boards of governors in colleges, at all. Of course, neither of the above positions is tenable; governance must balance the implications of a number of competing expectations (p. 7).

Pitman (1986:15) expressed a need for "co-operative" governance that is "sufficiently representative and intellectually dynamic to understand and ultimately respond to . . . profound societal movements."

Several recommendations for the improvement of college governance in Ontario were presented. In order to find the "most knowledgeable, credible and representative" people in the community, as well as, place responsibility for the quality of boards on individual institutions, boards should select their own local external members. Institutional representation including faculty, support staff, middle management and students must also be included to facilitate effective planning and to improve morale. Governance structures should be well defined and decisions made by those who will be held accountable for their implementation. Thus, in general, governance structures should be "more widely representative and encourage a higher commitment to communication" (p. 20). This can only be accomplished by eliminating the executive powers of the council of regents and strengthening the local boards of governors by shifting "more function and responsibility" to them. "More responsibility at the local college level, combined with effective leadership from the Minister, will provide the colleges with flexibility and direction" (p. 21).

SUMMARY

This review of related literature included an overview of governing boards and a summary of research studies judged to be relevant to the current study. Boards of governors are considered to be integral to the operation of public postsecondary institutions by both government and scholars. The concept of the "lay" governing board grew out of concern for the protection of the public investment and interest in colleges and universities. Total responsibility for the assets of the institution and the full power to manage was bestowed upon boards by government. Dennison and Harris (1984) found strong support for continued lay and community involvement in community college boards.

For almost two decades, the profile of the "typical" board member of postsecondary institutions has remained virtually unchanged. Hartnett (1969), Konrad (1977a), Thompson (1979), the National Commission on College and University Trustee Selection (1980), and Fistler (1982) found boards to be largely composed of middle-aged, well-educated, financially successful, professional, white males. Thus, public board membership was deemed stereotypic. Konrad (1977a), Thompson (1979) and Pitman (1986) expressed concern with respect to the apparent lack of representativeness of community college boards, but the National Commission (1980) was unable to find evidence to determine whether representation was associated with a particular method of selection. According to Fistler (1982), trustees of private colleges did not consider representation to be a problem as they felt they were able to assess the situation and choose their new members accordingly. Pitman (1986), in reference to community colleges, supported this contention as he found that the proximity of board members to their communities afforded the opportunity to select the most qualified people.

One way to alleviate representational concerns was thought to be linked to the type of board member selection process used by government. In the United States the selection of board members is accomplished by appointment, election or a combination of the two. In Canada appointment is the primary selection method. Discussions related to governor selection have focused on the issue of appointment versus election in both countries. While election was seen to be more democratic, the majority of scholars and practitioners preferred appointment as it enabled a more careful screening of potential candidates with respect to the talents and expertise they possess and the needs of the institution.

In addition, Konrad (1977a) related board effectiveness to a carefully designed selection process. Slover (1982) indicated that selection procedures had an effect on the role and function of the lay board. Fistler (1982) advocated the need for more descriptive evidence of selection procedures. Kohn and Mortimer (1983) also noted the lack of information on board member selection and emphasized the need for further research in the area.

There was general consensus in the literature with regard to the conventional roles and responsibilities of board members. Maintaining the integrity of the trust was cited as the top priority. The remainder of the roles ranged from selecting the president to ensuring financial solvency. Recent fiscal restraint policies have brought the issue of institutional accountability into the forefront. While the term was originally applied to student achievement, the emphasis has now shifted to cost-effectiveness concerns.

As a result of the growing public concern for issues such as representation and accountability, coupled with the apparent reluctance of boards to exercise their legal authority, researchers have questioned the future of governing boards. The current trend toward centralization and increased government control, fiscal concerns, changing societal values and greater demands by faculty and students for participation in governance have led to the conclusion that the roles and responsibilities of boards are in a state of flux. While scholars agreed that the composition and roles of governing boards may be altered in the near future, the direction and severity of such changes were speculative in nature.

The purpose of this study was to examine the process used to select Alberta community college public board members. While the review of the literature and the research studies cited in this chapter provided useful background information, only limited information was found to guide the development of the current study. Some aspects of the Hartnett (1969), Konrad (1977a), Thompson (1979), National Commission on College and University Trustee Selection (1980), and Fistler (1982) studies were relevant to the board member background profile that was developed. In particular, the Hartnett (1969) and Konrad (1977a) material was used to guide the development of the survey instrument designed for this study. The Konrad (1977b) study, which was concerned with governors' perceptions of their selection process, was the only study found to be directly related to part of the current research and assisted in the development of the board member interview guide.

In conclusion, the review of the literature showed that the area of board member selection has received little attention in any field of higher education. In particular, the absence of descriptive evidence of actual selection procedures was noteworthy. This lack of information helped to give direction to this study by indicating what areas of board selection were in need of further research. Thus, while some aspects of the current research were related to parts of former studies, a review of the related literature revealed no previous study of this particular type.

The next chapter describes the research design and methodology adopted for this study and the conceptual framework designed to guide the data collection and analysis.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

The current research is a study of governance and politics as they relate to one area of higher education. More specifically, it is a study of the recruitment of political elites to serve on community college governing boards. The primary objectives of this chapter are to outline the methodology adopted for the study and to describe the conceptual framework designed to guide the collection and analysis of data.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to examine the process used to select Alberta community college public board members. While investigating the main problem, answers to the following specific questions were sought:

Nomination Procedures

1. What is the process by which public board members are nominated for board membership?
    - (a) How are board vacancies made known to the public?
    - (b) Where do nominations originate?
    - (c) What procedures are followed in the nomination process?
    - (d) What criteria are used to nominate candidates?

Selection Procedures

2. What is the process by which public board members are selected for board membership?
    - (a) What procedures are followed in the selection process?
    - (b) What criteria are used in the selection process?
    - (c) Who is involved in the selection process?
    - (d) What is the role of cabinet in the selection process?
    - (e) Are decision makers required to explain the reasons for their selections? If so, to whom, in what format and to what degree?

Board Member Perceptions

3. How do community college public board members view their selection?
    - (a) Who do they believe nominated them for board membership?
    - (b) What nomination procedures do they believe were followed?
    - (c) What selection procedures do they believe were used?
    - (d) What individuals do they believe were involved in their selection?
    - (e) What criteria do they believe led to their selection?

Board Member Background Profile

4. What is the demographic profile of current community college public board members in the province of Alberta?
    - (a) What community activities were they engaged in prior to their appointment to the board?
    - (b) What was the nature of their involvement in party politics?
    - (c) What characteristics do they feel are important when selecting governing board members?

Opinions About the Selection Process

5. What opinions do respondents hold with respect to selected aspects of the current selection process?
    - (a) What terms do they believe describe the current selection process?
    - (b) What are the advantages of the current selection process?
    - (c) What are the disadvantages of the current selection process?
    - (d) How could the current selection process be improved?
    - (e) Do they believe there is an attempt to balance boards with respect to age, sex and occupational backgrounds?
    - (f) Do they believe boards to be representative of the community the college serves?
    - (g) Are they satisfied with the current selection process?
    - (h) What do they believe will happen to the current selection process in the next ten years?

METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the feasibility check, describes data collection and analysis procedures and examines the trustworthiness of the results of the study.

Feasibility Check

A feasibility check was conducted for three reasons: (1) to ensure the selection process was an important process carried out by government; (2) to ensure accessibility to key actors; (3) to pilot test the interview guide designed for public officials. Two prominent government officials who were knowledgable about postsecondary governance issues in Alberta agreed to assess the feasibility of the study. Personal interviews and meetings were held. Their input verified the value of the current research, confirmed accessibility to key respondents and the suggestions offered resulted in minor modifications to the data collection instrument. These modifications are described in more detail later in the chapter.

Collection of Data

A four-step data collection process, which utilized a survey questionnaire, interviews and document acquisition was employed. The scope of the research extended beyond simply descriptive material and attempted to provide explanations and reasons as to why the process was conducted in the manner described and what decision makers thought they were accomplishing by appointing certain individuals.

Survey questionnaire. First, a survey questionnaire was used to gather information from the total population of community college public board members in Alberta. The questionnaire was part of a larger research project under the direction of Konrad (1986) which was designed to examine the shifting role of governing boards. The composition, educational attitudes and role perceptions of board members in Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario were examined in that study. The questionnaire was a substantial revision of an earlier instrument used by Konrad (1976) in a survey of selected community college boards in Canada, which, in turn, was a modification of an instrument used by Harnett (1969) in a survey of American college and university trustees. The nature of the original modifications included updating the material in a Canadian context. Current revisions involved updating of responses, deleting some questions, adding others and reorganizing the material into five major sections in order to more closely reflect the orientation of the present research. The five sections of the survey instrument included questions related to background characteristics, board activities, educational attitudes, board selection and decision areas.

Two parts of the questionnaire were of particular interest for the purposes of this study (Appendix A). These two sections were of a descriptive nature. As Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1985:337) stated, "descriptive surveys basically inquire into the status quo; they attempt to measure what exists without questioning why it exists." The first part identified personal and professional background characteristics including age, gender, income, occupation, political ideology and affiliation, previous board experience and community involvement; the second section garnered governors' perceptions of their selection process including source of their nomination, degree of satisfaction with their selection process, extent of agreement with statements related to alternatives for nomination and selection proceedings, the importance attached to specific criteria in selecting board members and the identification of those criteria which they believed led to their selection.

The instrument was pilot-tested by current board members of an Alberta postsecondary institution not participating in the main study, as well as, retired governors of a participating college in order to obtain general comments and constructive criticism about the content of the questions and the design of the instrument. The suggestions and recommendations offered resulted in the modification of the format of some questions and the revision of some response categories.

Interviews with public officials. The second step of the data collection process involved conducting semi-structured interviews with individuals currently or at one time directly involved in the selection of public board members. The purpose of these interviews was to determine the sequential pattern of interaction whereby individuals were appointed to college governing boards. An elite interview structure which allowed the researcher to work from an interview guide, rather than a structured list of questions, was utilized (Appendix B). In this way, well-informed, knowledgeable respondents were able to speak at will. The interview questions were developed from the first, second and fifth research questions presented earlier in this chapter which pertained to the identification of nomination procedures, selection procedures and opinions about the selection process, respectively.

The interview guide was pilot-tested using prominent government officials in order to determine the clarity of the items and the extent to which they elicited the information required to accurately describe and ascertain opinions about the selection process. The general comments and constructive criticism offered by the officials resulted in the modification of the structure of some questions, as well as, the addition and deletion of other questions.

To devise a preliminary interview schedule, informants or individuals knowledgeable about postsecondary education in Alberta, were asked to nominate people currently or at one time directly involved in the selection process. These people were then interviewed. At the conclusion of each interview, the respondents, in turn, were also requested to provide names of prospective candidates. In this way, a "reputational" approach was used to identify important people in the area. The participants included current and former elected and appointed government officials, college presidents and board chairmen. In total, twenty-eight individuals were interviewed, twenty-six by means of personal interviews and two by telephone. Notes were taken during the interviews and more complete transcripts were prepared as soon as possible following each interview. This portion of the data collection phase was terminated when two conditions were met: (1) new data were no longer being generated and; (2) additional respondents were no longer being recommended.

Board member interviews. Following preliminary analysis of the questionnaire and the public officials' data, semi-structured interviews were conducted involving Alberta community college public board members in their first term of office. Following the lead of Konrad (1977b:139), longer serving board members were excluded as "their perceptions may have lost some precision over time." These interviews were used to gather data not easily accessible through the questionnaire format and in more detail than that elicited by the survey instrument. The purpose of the interviews was three-fold: (1) to ascertain the views of governors regarding background experiences and personal perceptions of their selection process; (2) to determine the extent of knowledge board members possessed with respect to their personal selection, as well as, the overall selection process as compared to that offered by public officials; and (3) to provide additional insights into the selection process by responding to queries based upon information acquired during interviews with public officials.

As was the case with the public officials' interviews, in order to allow respondents to speak at will, an elite interview structure which allowed the researcher to work from an interview guide, rather than a structured list of questions, was used (Appendix C). The interview questions were developed from the third and fifth research questions presented earlier in this chapter which pertained to board member perceptions regarding nomination and selection procedures and opinions about their selection process, respectively.

The interview guide was pilot-tested using community college public board members recently retired from an institution participating in this study. The purpose of the test was to determine the clarity of the items and the extent to which they elicited the information required to accurately describe the perceptions of public board members in relation to their selection process. The general comments and constructive criticism offered by the retired governors resulted in the modification of the structure of some questions, as well as, the addition and deletion of other questions.

Due to time, cost and accessibility constraints only four boards were selected for this portion of the research, two from the northern part of the province and two from the southern portion. One college from each area was located in a major population centre and the other was situated in a less populated community. No attempt was made to determine whether these institutions were representative of the ten communtiy colleges in Alberta. Of the twenty-eight public board members on these boards, fourteen were in their first term of office. All consented to participate in the study. Personal interviews were conducted in thirteen cases and a telephone interview was employed in the remaining case. Notes were taken during the interview and more complete transcripts were produced as soon as possible following each interview.

Document acquisition. The fourth phase of the data collection process was an ongoing part of the research that involved the acquisition of documents related to the selection of community college board members in Alberta. The original Colleges Act (1969), the most recent version (1985) and newspaper clippings were obtained from the Legislature Library files. Orders in Council were provided by the minister's office and the Legislative Services branch of the Department of Advanced Education. Memos sent from the minister to members of the legislative assembly (MLAs), copies of letters and an unpublished document ("Guidelines for Boards of Governors") given by the minister to appointed board members were also obtained from the minister's office. In addition, letters received by governors from the minister were provided by public board members. These documents provided a basic understanding of the arrangements made by government to coordinate the process used to select college board members.

Analysis of Data

Questionnaire data. Data analysis of the questionnaire returns was performed through the Computing Centre at the University of Alberta. Since the majority of the data was descriptive in nature, most of the information was presented in terms of frequency counts, mean responses and percentages of the total population. However, where applicable, in order to compare the perceptions of board members in relation to selected factors, a series of t-tests were performed on the pertinent item means. Significant differences were determined at the 0.05 level of confidence. The presentation and discussion of these data are provided in Chapter 5. To maintain the confidentiality of responses and to protect the identity of respondents, the survey data were compiled across respondent groups and responses were not identified by individual respondents.

Interview data. Two distinct sets of interview data were collected in this study: (1) data gathered from public officials; and (2) board member data. Both were analyzed separately according to similar classification schemes (Appendix D). Each classification scheme was composed of two major categories: (1) information related to the selection process; and (2) opinions about the selection process. Within each major category, sub-categories were developed using the research questions presented earlier in this chapter.

A separate reliability check was performed on each set of interview data. One hundred items were randomly selected from each group of transcripts. In addition to the researcher, four doctoral students in the field of educational administration were asked to code the data according to the established classification schemes. Two individuals were assigned to each set of data. Reliability coefficients of 0.96 and 0.97 were obtained for the data coded on these items for public officials and board members, respectively. This high degree of correlation confirmed the reliability of the two classification schemes developed to guide the data analysis.

Following the verification of the reliability of the classification system, the two sets of interview transcripts were coded according to the established classification schemes. Next, the two sets of transcipts were cut up to separate the items and sorted into packages according to the classification categories. Then, these packages of information were searched to identify regularities and patterns, as well as, to discern differences. To assist with the synthesis of data, tables and accompanying text were prepared where appropriate. The analysis of public officials' and board member interview data are presented in Chapters 4 and 6, respectively.

Once again, to protect the identity of the respondents, the interview data were compiled across respondent groups and no perceptions were identified by individual respondents. Participants were fully briefed about the nature and objectives of the research. They were assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. Prior consent was obtained for the use of direct quotations by respondents. Participants were informed of the opportunity to withdraw the information they provided at any time during the course of the study.

Trustworthiness of Results

Much of the data collected in this study involved the perceptions of respondents. According to French, Kast and Rosenzweig (1985:147), perceptions are heavily value laden for "even when facts are established, their meaning or significance may vary considerably for different individuals." Figure 1 presents a model of perception formation based upon the three mechanisms through which this process occurs. Initially, the individuals screen out information deemed irrelevant to the situation at hand and select that which they consider applicable. Based on past experiences, values, beliefs and attitudes, situations are then given meaning or interpreted. Closure occurs when the individuals draw conclusions regarding a given situation. These perceptions then guide the actors in pursuing a particular course of action.

Due to the subjective nature of perception formation, it is necessary to discuss the trustworthiness of the data presented in this study. Guba (1981) suggested four criteria for assessing the trustworthiness, or reliability and validity, of naturalistic inquiry.

Dependability was substituted for reliability, *credibility* for internal validity,

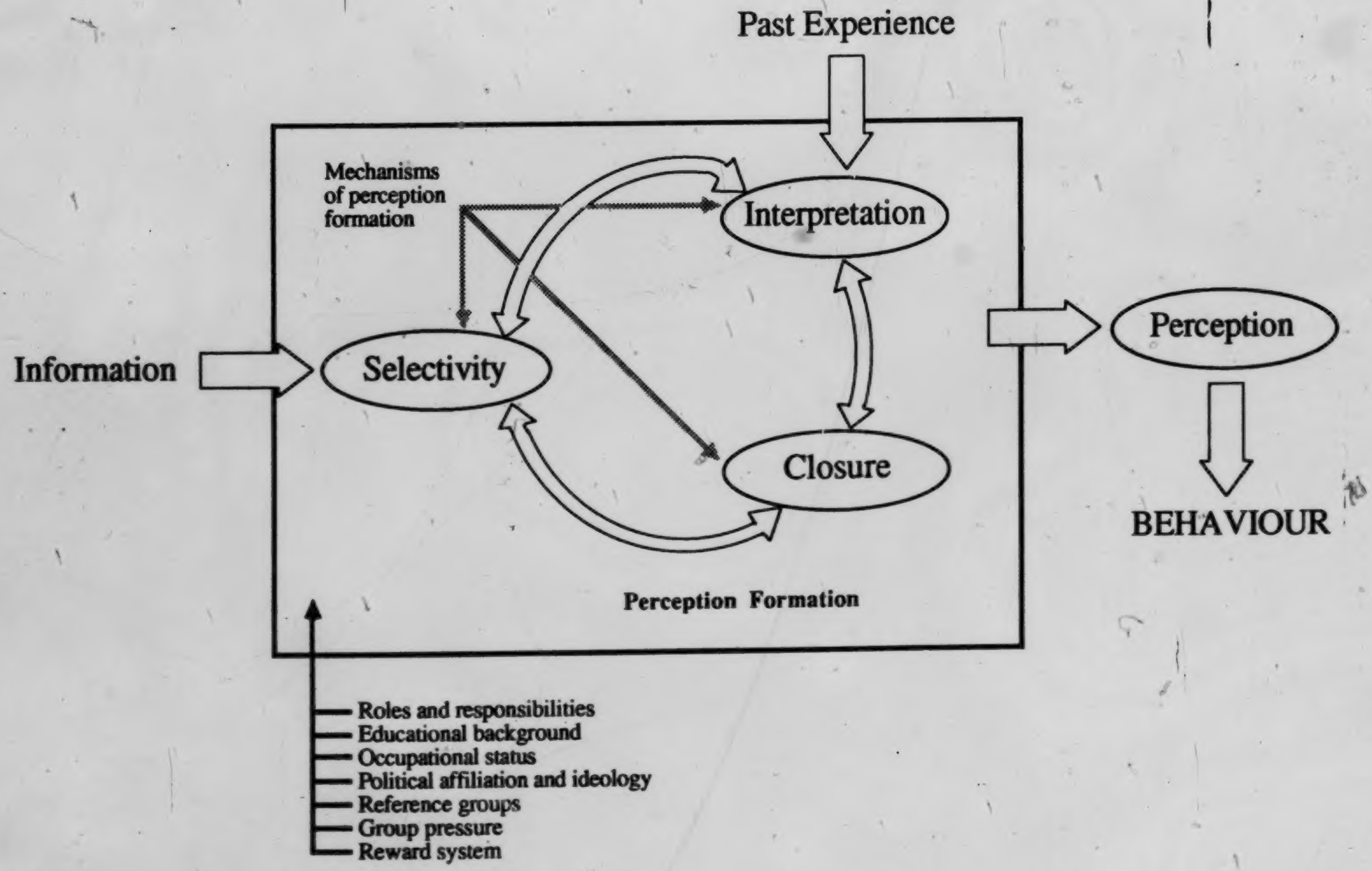
Past Experience
Mechanisms
of perception
formation
Interpretation
Information
Selectivity
Perception
Closure
BEHAVIOUR
Perception Formation
Roles and responsibilities
Educational background
Occupational status
Political affiliation and ideology
Reference groups
Group pressure
Reward system

Figure 1 Perception Formation

Adapted from French et al. (1985:149)

transferability for external validity and, an additional related term, *confirmability*, replaced objectivity. In reference to this study, the following techniques were used to maintain the trustworthiness of the research:

1. *Dependability* measures included conducting a feasibility check, using interview guides, employing systematic recording and coding procedures, conducting reliability checks and holding interviews and personal meetings with selected respondents to review interview transcripts and check interpretations of data.

2. *Credibility* measures included utilizing three forms of data collection, soliciting information from a large number of respondents covering a broad range of expertise and holding interviews and personal meetings with selected respondents to check interpretations of data.

3. *Transferability* measures included gathering thick descriptive data and purposely choosing a sample of respondents to maximize the scope and range of information provided.

4. *Confirmability* measures included preparing transcripts which reflected the direct responses of participants, adding researcher comments only at the conclusion of each transcript and disassociating transcripts from their source by cutting up coded transcripts and separating the items into classification categories.

THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework was developed to provide the basic building blocks for this research. It was used to identify the major components in this study and to guide the research. It was not meant to provide a complete picture of the study; it was but a place to start. As Easton (1965a:490) contended,

> the appropriate question to ask about a theoretical analysis today is not: does this fully explain the functioning . . . or does it offer a fire-proof set of concepts toward the end? . . . The appropriate question is: does this approach help us to take a small step in the right direction?

The basic purpose of this study was to examine the process used to select Alberta community college public board members. The principal assumption underlying the development of the conceptual framework was that the process used to select public board members functioned within a dynamic political system. Following the lead of Easton (1966:4), the concept of system was used in two different but related ways in the conceptual framework.

> First, it may refer to the empirical behavior which we observe and characterize as political life, and about which we hope to develop some explanatory theory. Second, it may refer to the set of symbols through which we hope to identify, describe, delimit and explain the behavior of the empirical system. Because a system in this sense is a set of ideas, we may call it a symbolic or theoretical system. A causal political theory is a symbolic system which has as its point of reference the behaving system we call politics. The problem is to determine the best conceptual scheme, once we attribute systemic qualities to the actions that constitute political life.

The literature did not provide the detailed model required to guide the current research. Thus, a model, termed a dynamic political system (or DPS), was designed specifically for the purposes of this study by incorporating the elements from three distinct conceptual schemes. The term DPS was used in two ways -- as a model and as a process. The model was intended to be a representation of the process. According to Kaplan (1964:264),

> a model is conceived as a structure of symbols interpreted in certain ways, and what it is a model of is the subject-matter specified by the interpretation. Relations among the symbols are presumed to exhibit corresponding relations among the elements of the subject-matter. The theory is more or less abstract -- that is, it neglects certain variables -- and what it describes are certain more or less "ideal" entities, having an existence only in the context of the theory itself. What is hoped is that the stystem of such entities will be isomorphic, in appropriate respects, to the real system which provides the subject-matter for the theory.

For the purposes of this study, the terms framework and model were used interchangeably.

The following section describes the conceptual framework designed to guide the collection and analysis of data for this study. First, the elements from three distinct conceptual schemes, synthesized to produce the model used in this study, are briefly outlined. A description of the DPS model follows. As the study evolved, the schematic representation of the DPS model evolved accordingly. The original schematic representation of the DPS model is presented together with a discussion of its strengths and weaknesses. Then, the modified schematic representation of the DPS is presented with an explanation of the advantages of this version as compared to the original schematic.

The Three Schemas Used to Design the DPS Model

Easton's system's model formed the major part of the framework. In his work he was seeking

> a way of unveiling the basic processes through which a political system, regardless of its generic or specific type, is able to persist as a system of behavior in a world either of stability or of change . . . . [The focus was] largely on the processes in systems, not on the structural forms through which these processes are served (Easton, 1965b:x).

He found that the perspectives of a systems analysis served to link both the natural and social sciences allowing for interdisciplinary discussion. As summarized by Wirt and Kirst (1972:13),

> In short, the utility of systems theory is that . . . it enables us at least to order existing knowledge or hunches and thereby to determine what portions of the scheme are clearly untenable, which ones have at least some support, and which need to be further studied.

The second framework was of a more specific nature. Cistone (1975) developed a conceptual scheme for the study of elected school board member recruitment and socialization. "Recruitment was defined as the process that selects (or allocates) individuals for specific political roles" (p. 50) and involved two phases -- eligibility and selection. These two phases, as adapted and elaborated by Worth (1986a) in relation to appointed board members, were adjusted for the current study.

Finally, Ashby (1958) often made analogies between the biological world and the world of educational institutions. While he was concerned mainly with the adaptation of institutions during times of change, the essential element drawn from his work for the purposes of this study pertained to the idea of conceptualizing the selection process as if it occurred within a living organism. This idea was consistent with Easton's perspective of system's analysis and the use of interdisciplinary approaches to conceptualizing political systems.

A Description of the DPS Model

The conceptual framework designed for this study consisted of four major components: the environment surrounding the DPS, nomination and selection procedures which take place within the DPS and the products of the DPS termed outputs. In order to analyze and understand the system, these components are identified and described along with the interactions or linkages among them. This study focused primarily upon the last three components. The environment provided the context for the study and is described in terms of its effect on the development and operation of the system.

The environment. According to Taylor (1980:63), the environment consists of the actors, processes and information outside the specific system under consideration that have an impact on the initiation, development and outputs of the system. As Easton (1966:4) explained,

> systems analysis interprets political life as an entity which maintains its own boundaries while surrounded by and interacting with other social systems. It is an open system, subject to influences from outside its own perimeter.

These external influences are termed inputs and include environmental demands and environmental support.

Easton (1966:8) defined a demand "as an expression of opinion that a particular authoritative allocation should or should not be made." Demands initiate an action and take the form of suggestions or recommendations. In this case, the demands are for public board members. Support was defined by Easton (1966:10) as "a kind of transaction, other than demands between a system and its environment." The input of support is in the form of behaviors and can be measured by the number of members supporting the system. In this case, support refers to the support given by the public to the government. Without support for those holding political office, demands could not be processed. Changing environmental conditions influence the demands and support placed upon the DPS.

According to Easton (1966:8), there must be a means of limiting volume and regulating the content of the demands on the system. Otherwise, excessive time would be required for processing demands. In terms of this study, an artificial boundary or gateway was established to regulate the demands on the DPS. The boundary not only differentiates the DPS from its environment but becomes the site of interactions between the two entites. As environmental conditions change, the kinds of demands allowed to enter the system are exptected to change accordingly. When this does not occur stress results and the existing system may be threatened with a loss of support. In order to alleviate the stress, the system must adapt to the perceived changes. As Taylor (1980:69) explained, the boundary is not static but shifts over time to include or exclude actors and react to changing environmental demands and support as the system evolves. Within the boundary, public officials serve as gatekeepers and decide what is or is not permissible within the system.

The five research questions outlined in Chapter 1 and the four-step data collection procedure outlined earlier in this chapter did not include a reference to the environment, boundary of the system or gatekeepers. However, to set the study in context, the broader environment had to be considered. Therefore, information related to the environment was described in terms of the professional literature.

Nomination and selection procedures. The process used to select community college public board members occurs within the DPS. Selection results from a process incorporating an initial nomination phase and a final selection component. Nomination and selection procedures form two of the major components of the study. As Cistone (1975:54) stated, "the selection process explains the 'how' of recruitment by the sequential pattern of interaction whereby individuals are ultimately [appointed] to a specific political office."

In order to describe this pattern of interaction, the perceptions of public officials, as well as, the board members themselves were needed to ascertain the steps in the process and to determine the actors involved. Certain eigibility criteria were used in nomination procedures to choose candidates. The individuals deemed as eligibles were nominated for boardsmanship and continued through the system. Then during final selection procedures the nomination criteria plus additional criteria were used to select the successful members from the list of nominees. Eligibility for public board membership was directly related to stature in the political arena. As Cistone (1975:53) pointed out, "the likelihood of entry to specific political positions is primarily determined by a political opportunity structure. . . ." Worth (1986a:2) added that "among the key determinants of effective opportunity are the individual's motivation, abilities and political resources -- affiliations, time, occupational success and the like." Thus, the criteria used to guide nominations and final selections formed an important part of the selection process.

The first three research questions stated in Chapter 1 were designed to gather information from respondents in order to describe current nomination and selection procedures, the actors involved and the accompanying criteria. As Taylor (1980:72) cautioned, "although much of this information is of a subjective nature, involving perceptual biases on the part of the actor[s], it is essential to an explanation of the system's operation." An analysis of the information obtained from the actors led to the determination of linkages among those in the system which translated into a more indepth understanding of the process under analysis.

The outputs. The outputs of the DPS refer to the individuals appointed as community college public board members. The fourth research question was designed to determine the kind of outputs the DPS produced. In other words, a background profile of the individuals selected for boardsmanship was developed.

Once selected, the outputs leave the DPS and enter the environment as successful candidates. Due to their affiliation with the political party in office, they are considered extensions of the DPS that appointed them. According to Easton (1966:9),

> these outputs leave the system to act upon society as a whole, with consequences that may make themselves felt subsequently through the generation of additional wants that seek entry into the system. This forms a closed-loop process, characterized as 'feedback.'

Through such feedback, Easton (1966:19) continued, decision makers "can determine the extent to which their outputs are alleviating stress and increasing support." The impact of the feedback loop depends on whether the decision makers are able and willing to react to the information provided by the outputs they produced. "It is through their reactions to the continuous flow of information and actions through a system and its environment," Easton (1966:22) explained, "that a system seeks to control, regulate, modify, or fundamentally transform itself and its environment." In the end, a successful system must have some means of informing decision makers about the results of their actions. The feedback loop performs this function.

The final research question was designed to ascertain the opinions of respondents in relation to selected aspects of the selection process. These opinions provided the feedback to decision makers about the perceived success of their decisions. The impact of this information is dependent upon the ability and desire of the decision makers to make adjustments to nomination and selection procedures and the accompanying criteria. According to Easton (1966:4), if the system "is to persist, it must obtain adequate feedback about it past performances, and it must be able to take measures that regulate future behavior."

Schematic Representation of the Original DPS Model

To schematically represent the DPS model (Figure 2), a biological analogy was developed. A microorganism known as the amoeba has a selectively permeable membrane that regulates what enters and leaves the system. This membrane is a flexible, almost fluid structure that is able to move to adjust to the surrounding environment. The environment places demands on the amoeba, indicated by concave segments of the membrane, but it also provides support for the organism. The boundary or gateway of the DPS serves a function similar to that of the membrane. Gatekeepers regulate the demands imposed on the DPS by the surrounding environment. The environment also provides the support necessary for the DPS to function.

Substances that have been allowed to enter the organism but are deemed unsuitable for use are ejected from the system, indicated by a convex segment of the membrane. The individuals rejected at the eligibility phase of the DPS represent a similar case. They are not considered to be suitable candidates for boardsmanship. An arrow shows the ejection of these unsuccessful candidates in the diagram.

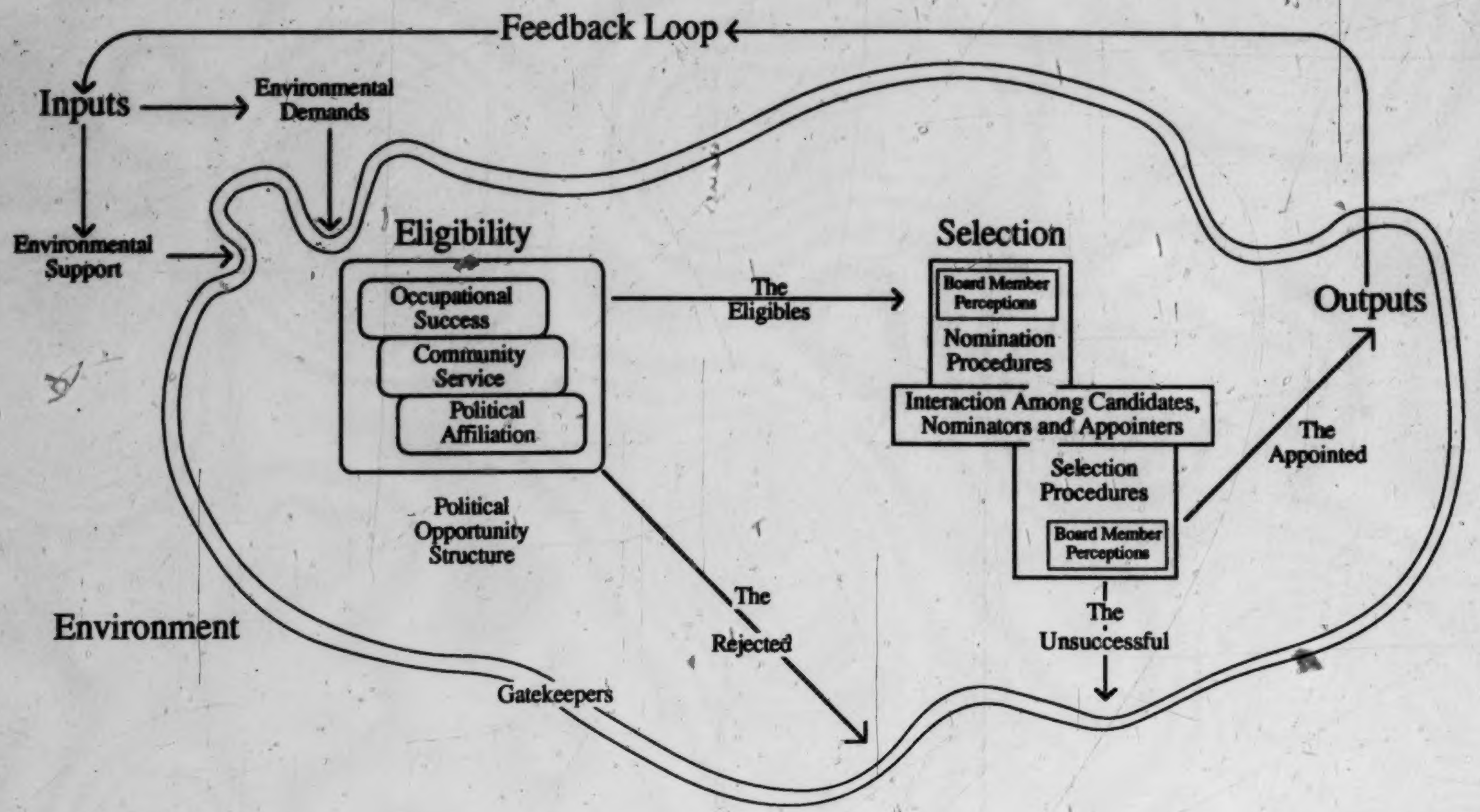
Feedback Loop
Inputs
Environmental Demands
Environmental Support
Eligibility
Occupational Success
Community Service
Political Affiliation
Political Opportunity Structure
Environment
Gatekeepers
The Eligibles
The Rejected
Selection
Board Member Perceptions
Nomination Procedures
Interaction Among Candidates, Nominators and Appointers
Selection Procedures
Board Member Perceptions
The Unsuccessful
The Appointed
Outputs

Figure 2 The Original DPS Model

To maintain its existence, many chemical processes or interactions are carried out within the amoeba by various components of the system using the suitable substances. In a corresponding fashion, within the DPS many interactions also take place. To become eligible for nomination, prospective candidates must have developed a suitable political opportunity structure. This is represented on the diagram by a set of credentials which include occupational success, community service and political affiliation. The eligibles, depicted by an arrow on the diagram, then move on to the nomination and selection phases of the appointment process. These phases are represented on the diagram by squares. To illustrate the interrelationship of the interaction that takes place during the two phases, a portion of the border of each square is left open. Interactions take place among the candidates, the nominators and the appointer. Board members' perceptions of nomination and selection proceedings assisted in the clarification of the selection process and are represented in the diagram by a small rectangle embedded within the larger squares which depict the entire process.

As the amoeba processes substances within it, waste materials are produced and also expelled from the system. The unsuccessful candidates meet a similar fate. Another arrow on the diagram shows them ejected from the system.

To move itself forward and to expand into its environment the amoeba creates a pseudopod which is a finger-like extension of its fluid body. In a similar manner, due to the political nature of their appointments, the candidates appointed for board membership are viewed as extensions of the DPS that selected them. The appointed board members are depicted as outputs in the diagram. They leave the system and interact with the environment. Through these interactions, they influence the support given to the DPS. This creates a feedback loop which serves to inform the actors within the system of the success of the outputs they produced.

Strengths of the original schematic representation. A major strength of the original schematic representation of the DPS model was related to the analogy developed between the biological world and the selection process, especially the fluid nature of the boundary surrounding the DPS. This analogy illustrated the dynamic nature of the selection process and showed that the process continually evolves in response to changing envirionmental demands and support. The inclusion of the feedback loop depicted another major strength of the original model by indicating that the outputs interact with the environment and affect the inputs of the system.

Weaknesses of the original schematic representation. As the study evolved, several weaknesses in the original schematic representation became apparent. The major components of the conceptual framework were not clear from this schematic. The relationship of the research questions to the DPS model was not easily discernable. The difference between nomination and selection criteria was not shown. Similarly, there was no indication of the possibility that nomination and selection procedures involved different actors. Thus, the original schematic was modified in order to more closely reflect the dynamics of the selection process.

Schematic Representation of the Modified DPS Model

As illustrated in Figure 3, in order to overcome the weaknesses found in the original schematic, several modifications were made to DPS model. The biological analogy and feedback loop which were identified as the major strengths of the original schematic were retained. However, the schematic representation of the selection process functioning within the DPS was altered considerably.

The major components of the conceptual framework included the environment, nomination procedures, selection procedures and the outputs. These components are clearly depicted in the modified model. The relationship of the five research questions outlined in Chapter 1 to the DPS model is also easily recognized. The first three

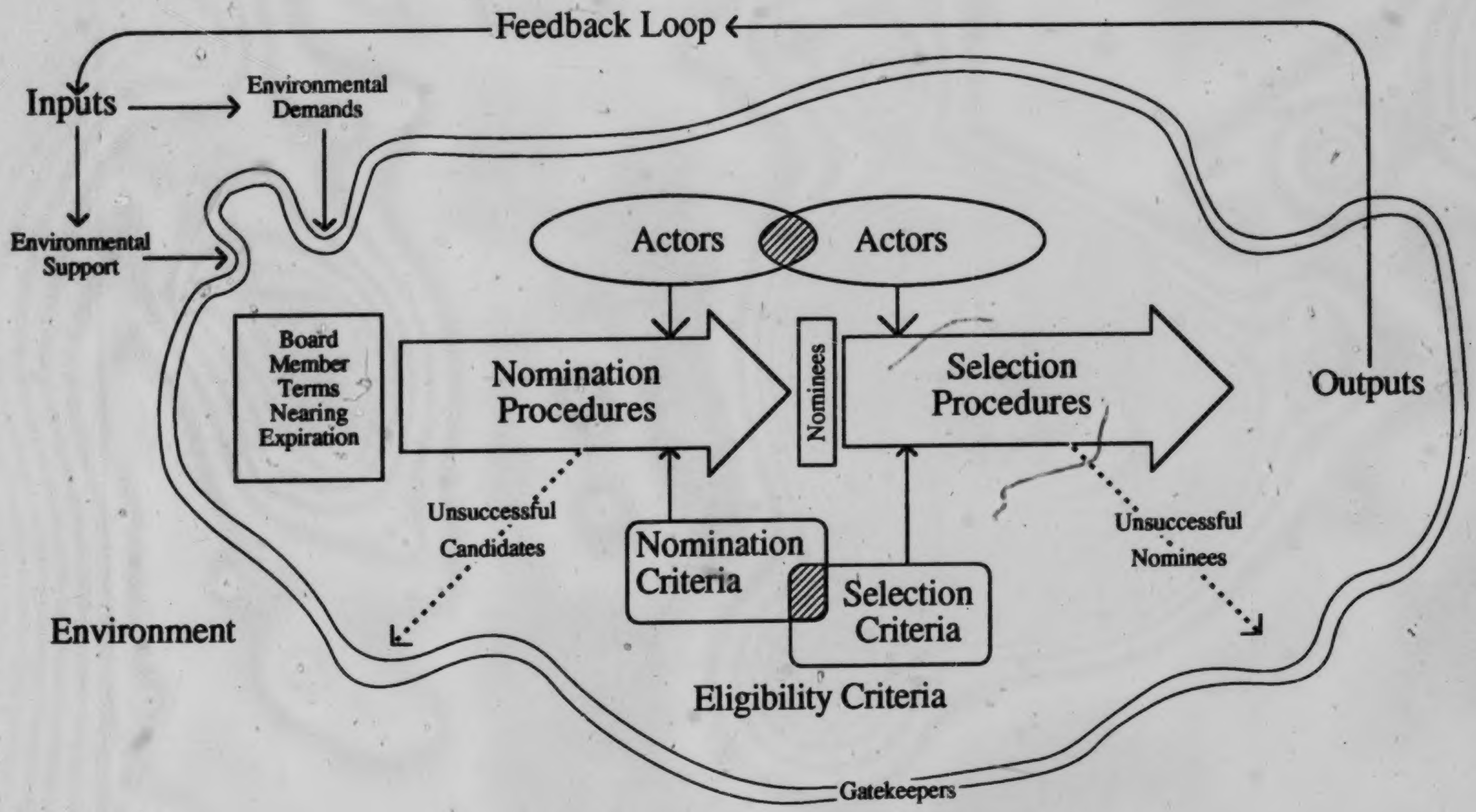
Feedback Loop
Inputs
Environmental Demands
Environmental Support
Board Member Terms Nearing Expiration
Actors
Actors
Nomination Procedures
Nominees
Selection Procedures
Outputs
Unsuccessful Candidates
Nomination Criteria
Selection Criteria
Unsuccessful Nominees
Environment
Eligibility Criteria
Gatekeepers

Figure 3 The Modified DPS Model

questions dealt with nomination and selection procedures including the actors involved and the criteria used. The fourth concerned the development of a background profile of the outputs of the process. The fifth query was related to the opinions of respondents which formed the feedback loop in the diagram. Thus, the modified schematic provided a map of the selection process by outlining the major components of the study. The purpose of the data collection and analysis phases was to determine in detail what occurred within each component.

Some actors participate in both nomination and selection procedures, but others do not. The actors are portrayed in the diagram by means of ovals. Two separate, overlapping ovals are used to represent those individuals involved in the two sets of procedures. The actors involved in nomination procedures use certain criteria to determine nominees from among potential candidates. The successful candidates then enter the next component of the DPS where final selections are made by actors from among the group of nominees. Since nomination criteria form part of the criteria used in the final selection phase, the two sets of criteria are represented in the diagram by overlapping rectangles.

In summary, the purpose of the conceptual model was to serve as a guide for data collection and analysis. It acted as a map and simply showed the preliminary course of action. The major components of the study and the interrelationships among them were identified. In response to Easton's (1965a:490) question, cited at the beginning of this section: yes, this approach did help to take a small step in the right direction.

> At the very least, this mode of conceptualizaton will enable us to interpret political life as an open system and thereby to pose questions with regard to the kinds of exchanges that such a system has with its environment, to the way in which the members of the system respond to these exchanges, and to the determinants of these dynamic processes (Easton, 1979:34).

As Wirt and Kirst (1972:13) maintained, it at least enabled one to order existing information or ideas. Drawing upon an analogy from the biological world, as Ashby (1958) did in his work, helped to illustrate the dynamic nature of the process used to select Alberta community college public board members.

SUMMARY

This chapter presented the methodology adopted for the study and described the conceptual framework designed to guide the collection and analysis of data.

A feasibility check verified the value of the reseach and confirmed accessibility to key actors. Data collection and analysis were accomplished by means of a four-step process. A survey questionnaire was distributed to all Alberta public board members to gather demographic data and information pertaining to board members' views of their selection process. Using a "reputational approach," interviews with public officials were conducted to determine the sequential pattern of interaction whereby individuals were appointed to governing boards. Board members in their first term of office, representing four college boards, were interviewed to garner their perceptions relative to their own selection process. Both sets of interview data were analyzed independently using similar classification schemes. The final stage of data collection involved acquisition of documentation relevant to the study. In order to maintain the trustworthiness of the research, several techniques related to dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability were employed.

By incorporating the elements from three distinct conceptual schemes, a framework termed a dynamic political system or DPS was designed to identify the major parts of the study and to guide the research. The conceptual framework consisted of four major components which were described along with the interactions among them: the environment surrounding the DPS, nomination and selection procedures which take place within the DPS and the products of the DPS termed outputs. This study focused primarily upon the last three components.

To schematically represent the DPS model and illustrate the dynamic nature of the selection process, a biological analogy was developed. As the study evolved, weaknesses in the original schematic became apparent resulting in the modification of the DPS model to more closely reflect the dynamics of the selection process. As a mode of conceptualization, the purpose of the DPS model was to illustrate a political process as an open system, to depict exchanges the system has with its environment and to determine the manner in which the members of the system respond to these interactions, as well as, those within the system.

CHAPTER 4

THE PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the Colleges Act (1985), Alberta community college public board members are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor by an Order in Council. There is no prescribed legislation or documentation, official or unofficial, outlining the process used in the selection of board members. However, since the inception of the Colleges Act in 1969, unofficial procedures have evolved to guide board selections. The purpose of this part of the study was to determine the sequential pattern of interaction whereby individuals are appointed to governing boards and to gather opinions on selected aspects of the process.

This chapter describes the procedures and criteria used in the nomination and selection of public board members. Opinions about the selection process including process descriptors, advantages and disadvantages of the current process, suggested improvements, and future projections are also provided. The chapter presents a composite description of the perceptions of twenty-eight elected and appointed government officials, college presidents and board chairmen, all of whom have at one time been involved in the process used to select Alberta community college public board members. Quotations used in this chapter denote direct comments of respondents.

NOMINATION PROCEDURES

Due to the lack of documented procedures, the minister assigned to the Department of Advanced Education at a particular point in time enjoys considerable latitude with regard to nomination and selection procedures. Thus, when the minister is replaced the process changes accordingly. In particular, nomination procedures have been altered substantially since 1969.

Evolution

Originally, "to avoid the patronage aspect often associated with government appointments," an official recalled, advertisements were used to garner nominees for board positions. These advertisements were placed in the major newspapers throughout the province. In this way, the opportunity existed for the general populace to participate in the selection of board members. The purpose of the advertisements, another continued,

> was to find good people who wanted to participate, that is, to flush out interesting and interested people . . . . The advertisements would be in the name of the government and would state something like this: looking for community minded people interested in postsecondary education, active in the community is an asset, involved in business is an asset . . . very open. . . . [The public] would be asked to nominate someone or get someone to nominate them.

Actually, as depicted in Appendix E, some of the advertisements were even more open-ended than described above. They simply stated the names of the institutions, the number of vacancies, where to send nominations and indicated that appointments would be made from the nominations submitted. There was no mention of recommended criteria.

The success of the advertising campaign was not anticipated by government. A large number of names was forwarded to the minister from a wide variety of sources for each vacancy. Political parties, community groups, business associations, current college boards, as well as, individuals partipated in the process. Ironically, it was the success of the campaign that eventually resulted in its demise. One person offered the following:

> The problem was, that there were too many names. The premier and the minister would get together and informally discuss the nominees, on the golf course, in the hallway, over a drink. . . . They would narrow the list down by weeding out people they didn't like. But, there would still be too many names left, so then the minister would grab the premier and ask him to have his staff check out the others as the premier had all sorts of contacts all over the province, or the minister might just nominate the people who he felt he wanted and just second guess the premier. The most common and easiest way of narrowing down the list was to phone the board chairman or the local MLA in the area and ask them who they wanted.

In short, "the volume simply created too many problems that the minister's office was not designed to handle and the benefits of such a process could not be seen," conceded an individual. For instance, in one day 120 applicants were received for a single position. "The minister wondered how they were going to sift through all of these . . . how would they explain the 119 that were not accepted. . . ."

Government was extremely concerned about the reaction of the unsuccessful candidates and their support groups. It did not want to risk offending the electorate. Yet, people did demand explanations. Some felt slighted, an official recalled, for "on the one hand you asked for their opinion, that is the nominees, and then didn't use their suggestions."

Other difficulties also led to the termination of the advertising campaign. Many of the resumes were considered to be of poor quality leading government to question whether they were getting the best candidates for the job. "Sometimes you do not get the best people this way as some who are prominent in the community don't want to take the risk of being turned down," a respondent added. Often, nominators did not discern the willingness of their candidate to serve prior to formal nomination. In one case, the minister contacted an individual to inform him of his appointment and the person was not only unaware of his nomination, but had no desire to become a board member. "That ended the advertising process," an individual testified.

"The process was not exactly stopped, it evolved," another reasoned. This evolution took place over a period of almost ten years (1969 - 1978) and many factors contributed to the present process including the change in provincial government in 1971, the development shortly thereafter of a new department to deal with postsecondary education, and the replacement of ministers every four years. The "feeling was that the process was well enough known now that there was no need to continue," explained an official. Advertisements had served their purpose. In other words, the public was considered to be sufficiently aware of the proper channels of communication with government regarding board appointments.

Since the Colleges Act (1969) did not stipulate nominations of any kind, the advertising process could be eliminated at any time by the minister. The mechanism for nominations was not considered by government to be the important element in the selection process. The identification of "competent" board members was the primary objective. The termination of the advertising campaign, an official concluded, "was simply the result of a history of changes." Appointments, government believed, could be made more efficiently by using contacts in the constituencies in which the colleges are located.

The Actors and the Process

Currently, there are no public advertisements to solicit nominations for board positions. In fact, "there is still no structured nomination format," an official declared. "Anyone can write to the minister anytime, just like on any other issue." Nevertheless, analysis of the interview data revealed that implicit procedures have evolved to guide the selection process.

Board member terms of office are designated in the Colleges Act (1985). College governors serve an initial three-year term with the possibility of appointment for an additional three-year term. Therefore, government officials know when board vacancies are pending. A list of upcoming vacancies for all boards and other agencies composed of government appointed members, termed "The Blue List," is prepared to keep cabinet members informed of this information. The department drafts correspondence outlining the number, type and location of vacancies. The minister sends memos to the MLAs in the immediate vicinity and surrounding region of the colleges requesting names and resumes of candidates (Appendix F). Usually, he requests a minimum of three or four nominees for each vacant position. Resumes outlining occupation, previous elected and appointed positions, previous public or community service and any other pertinent information are required to support nominations. Items addressing personal matters such as political party preference or current state of business affairs are not included. "This would be done verbally, usually through a phone call," one person confided.

Current boards, in particular board chairmen, are also actively involved in the nomination process. "Boards are treated like corporations," an official remarked, "It is their responsibility, not government's, to assess the needs of the community and the college." Either MLAs approach the board chairmen in their constituencies to discuss the kinds of people that are required by boards to meet the needs of their colleges or the minister personally contacts the chairmen to request nominees. "Current board members," another continued, "are representative of certain sectors of the community . . . they serve as contacts to these sectors and get in touch with potential candidates." Often, board members discuss prospective members, but they "never record these kinds of conversations," an individual disclosed.

According to several officials, "candidates are approached and asked if they will let their name stand" before nomination lists are finalized. A prioritized list of institutional needs together with the names of individuals identified as possessing the capabilities to meet these needs is prepared. Although, in most cases, an official admitted, "one particular individual is seriously recommended for each vacancy. The other names are just used as back-ups." Usually the chairmen review the lists with their local MLAs and then submit them to the minister. In this manner, they suggest to the minister "what and whom they want."

Nominations also come from other sources. The premier, minister and MLAs approach personal contacts, "the party faithfuls," in their constituencies to act as informal referees. Most of these contacts are "trusted" business and/or political associates. In some colleges, the president is intimately involved in the nomination process. As one person stated, "in a healthy situation the president and board chairman would discuss the criteria wanted, as well as, the actual people." Some people nominate themselves. Opposition MLAs, especially if the college resides in their constituency, participate. Cabinet has the opportunity to add or delete names from the list. However, in most cases, government depends to a large degree on the suggestions made from current board members, especially those whose terms are ending. Consequently, as one individual concluded, "there is some degree of self-perpetuation [of the board]."

Government is extremely concerned about providing explanations about why specific individuals were not considered for boardsmanship. In order to avoid "problems" from developing as a consequence of people "getting their hopes and expectations up," prospective nominees are not contacted by government prior to official appointments, a respondent explained. "As a result, to some extent the minister is working in the dark," another continued. He has to "second guess" the willingness of people to become board members and depends to a large extent on the nominators' informal contacts with potential candidates. Some nominees are vetoed immediately based upon information provided by MLAs and contacts in the constituencies or data the minister has personally gathered. In addition, one person remarked, board chairmen and presidents are expected to "protect the government from embarrassing situations." In order to avoid having to provide explanations to unsuccessful candidates, the minister prefers that names not be submitted in the first place. Thus, the minister chooses to keep communication with candidates to a minimum and instead deals almost exclusively with nominators.

Criteria

Other than Canadian citizenship and Alberta residency, there are no prescribed criteria in the Colleges Act (1985) for board membership. Hence, a wide variety of criteria are used to support nominations. However, those originating from government sources, such as MLAs and their personal and professional contacts, as well as boards are based on what has been termed "implicit" criteria. "It is rather clear in the mind of the minister," confided a respondent, "what criteria he uses and this translates into what criteria he expects others to use."

"The first and most important criteria are competence and ability rather than the relationship . . . with the minister or MLA," an official disclosed. Two past cases were cited in which there "were essentially politically appointed boards that were half asleep." Serious problems developed because these boards "were out of touch with the aspirations of the students and faculty." In both instances government had to intervene and attempt to ameliorate the conflicts. As one official recounted, these experiences served to demonstrate that "friendship is not enough to carry you through if conflict or problems develop." In fact, another continued, "the situation becomes more intense for the minister to deal with than if they were strangers. It is easier to discipline someone if they are not close to you." Thus, an individual affirmed, government "wanted good people not just patronage appointments."

In order to discern the competence and ability of potential candidates, a "reputational approach is used." According to one official, "They never play games with the process. It is taken very seriously." Government depends to a large extent upon contacts in the community to assess the capabilities of possible nominees. Their "assessment," a person related, "is based upon personal experience with the individual and his reputation."

A wide variety of characteristics are used to determine potential candidates. Since the premier "is very, very, very much in control" and displays what is termed as a "corporate style of management" business expertise is sought, one person reported. "Good, strong business backgrounds [are believed to] bring discipline and metholology of business to the board which should result in better management of finances . . . ." As a result, another continued, "most of the people [nominated] are businessmen or high powered hospital administrators, principals or mayors . . . ." One individual estimated that "at least 80 percent of those [recommended] are from business and industry." As compared to salaried people, an official claimed,

> business people are usually more political as they are used to competing for scarce resources, which is what politics is all about. Therefore, they are considered to be the best candidates for the job, as they have to do the same thing for the college.

In addition, a person remarked, since "occupation is an indicator and reflector of ability and socio-economic status," business people also often occupy influential positions within their communities and participate to a large degree in community activities. The extent of this community involvement is another major factor in the determination of competence and ability, an official pointed out, as it reflects the level of "interest and dedication to public service."

Thus, although numerous criteria are used to choose candidates for office, "demonstrated ability" in business and community affairs takes precedence. As one individual concluded, "success in some way is definitely a pre-requisite."

SELECTION PROCEDURES

After the nomination phase has been completed, attention turns to selection procedures. During this phase of the process, one individual is chosen for each board vacancy from the pool of official nominees submitted from a variety of sources. Once again, the lack of prescribed proceedings has resulted in the evolution of unofficial procedures to guide the selection process. However, unlike nomination procedures, which have undergone substantial revisions during the fifteen years of appointed college boards, selection procedures have gone through more gradual refinement.

Evolution

The changes that occurred in the selection process can be attributed to a large degree to the changes that were taking place in government. In 1971 a new provincial government was elected. Due to its inexperience, its internal processes for rewarding "the party faithfuls" were not well-developed. Therefore, ministers originally relied on bureaucracy for much of their information and guidance. As they and their staff became more experienced, they developed their own information systems. An official described the involvement of the department in the selection of board governors as an evolution of three overlapping phases:

1. Suggestion/Reaction Phase.

Bureaucrats were invited by the minister to make suggestions for board appointments and were asked to react to suggestions made from other sources.

2. Reaction Phase.

The department was only invited to react to suggestions made from others.

3. No Involvement Phase.

Department officials were simply informed of appointments.

This evolution was attributed in part to the style of leadership displayed by the premier, which was described as "bringing control of government back from the bureaucracy," and in part to the maturation of the newly elected political party as they developed their own sources of information.

While department participation in the selection of board members was curtailed, it was expanded with regard to the administration of the process. In 1978, responsibility for coordination of selection procedures was moved from the minister's office to the department. A new position was created that reported directly to the minister's office rather than going through the "regular channels" of communication within the department. The responsibilities of the position included notifying the minister of upcoming vacancies, drafting memos to MLAs and preparing nominee documentation for cabinet.

The format of the material presented to cabinet was also modified. Originally, members of the cabinet would be given complete resumes and any other documentation received by the minister with respect to each nominee. However, cabinet ministers did not have the time to read all of this information. As one respondent confided, "approximately one third of the ministers read the resumes, another third glanced through them and the final third would ignore them." In an attempt to make this task more manageable for cabinet, the minister decided to construct summary reports of candidates based on the information provided in resumes and the associated documentation.

Since nominations are considered to be confidential, this function was originally performed exclusively by the minister's office. However, the minister's office was not equipped to handle the volume of work this modification created. Thus, the responsibility to reduce the nominee resumes to one page memos for use in cabinet was assigned to the department official who reported directly to the minister's office.

Other changes have also occurred with respect to the criteria used to select board members. Attempts have been made to balance the board with respect to occupational backgrounds. In the past, it was not uncommon to have, for example, several lawyers on one board. More recently, while a variety of occupations are represented, there is now an emphasis on business credentials. This shift in emphasis was thought by a number of respondents to stem from the then premier's desire for "a corporate style of management." Regional representation has recently become prominent as well. In order to allow for participation from communities outside of the urban centre in which the head office of the institution is located, there is a deliberate attempt to choose governors from the surrounding areas.

As evidenced by these changes, "the process of selection has evolved and is still evolving." The degree to which revisions are made is dependent to a large extent on the minister assigned to the department at a particular time.

The Actors and the Process

The current process used to make the final selections for board appointments is centred more closely in the minister's office than are nomination procedures. As a result, an official affirmed, "the selection process is seen as a 'black box' on the political side." While government does not have a "good set of anticipatory regulations, which are often called 'red tape,'" a third party countered, "we have ways established like clubs and other organizations do . . . unwritten rules and conventions that are not subject to bylaws and regulations. If it was desirable the process would be legislated." These "conventions," another added, "have been allowed to form" based on procedures that have been tried and have proved effective. This section describes these procedures.

After nominations have been gathered, candidate documentation is sent from the minister's office to the department official who coordinates board selections. This individual prepares one page summaries of each candidate based on the information provided in the resumes, covering letters and attached memos. The major components of the reports include occupation, community, elective and board experience. The summaries are returned to the minister's office where more complete background checks are conducted by the minister's personal staff.

Discussions with referees and sometimes background checks of the referees themselves are used to "narrow down" the list of nominees. The minister's executive assistant and senior staff are very involved in this aspect of the process. The minister consults MLAs and keeps them informed of the proceedings. Board chairmen are also very influential and can play prominent roles in the process. Rarely are people appointed to their boards who do not meet with their approval. They possess what has been termed as "an informal veto." Occasionally, the premier becomes involved and he has a "formal veto." His choices take priority regardless of whether or not they are included on the list. As with the majority of the proceedings, "little is committed to paper." Discussions are treated in strict confidence.

Although presidents are not usually involved in final selections, an official related, "they have other avenues of recourse if they don't like what is going on." They will let their MLA, the minister or his deputy know their concerns and let them "discretely" handle the situation by informing the "right" people. The style of the minister determines to a large degree who is consulted and, in general, the process is held very close to government.

Consequently, several respondents remarked, "there is an element of patronage." It is a mechanism, they explained, that can be used to reward or acknowledge friends and/or associates. In order to be involved to any degree in the selection process "you must be known in some way to the minister," one person testified. In defence of this mode of operation, an individual offered the following: "Political patronage is part of the fabric of our society. . . . We should not pretend it is not there . . . for it will always be there."

When the minister has completed his background queries, he ranks the nominees for each board in order of priority based upon information received from nominators and collected during the background checks. Rarely, does he overturn board decisions. "The chairmen know that the three people selected by the board would be approved by the minister," an official assured, "He [the minister] might switch priority rankings of the individuals and occasionally pick number two instead of number one, but that is about all." Then, cabinet becomes involved in the process.

Since the Department of Advanced Education was formed in 1971, there have been five ministers assigned to the portfolio. An analysis of the interview data revealed that there have been essentially three different ministerial approaches for presenting the nominees to cabinet:

1. All candidates from all sources are listed in order of priority. The entire list is given to each cabinet minister. Cabinet, usually upon the recommendation of local MLAs, selects an individual for each vacancy. Local MLAs not in cabinet discuss nominees directly with the minister before cabinet meets. The minister reflects the views of MLAs during cabinet proceedings.

2. A short prioritized list of nominees composed of three to five names is presented to cabinet. The remainder of the candidates are rejected by the minister. Final selections are made by cabinet, usually upon the recommendation of local MLAs. The minister reflects the views of MLAs not in cabinet.

3. The minister brings forth one name for each vacancy and asks if cabinet has any concerns regarding his recommendations. The remainder of the nominees are rejected by the minister. This approach appears to be the current method of presentation.

Cabinet spends little time discussing board appointments as they are not considered to be a priority. According to one official, "given the crowded nature of cabinet agendas . . . decisions are made on the basis of the minister's recommendations." Delays in filling vacancies can often be attributed to discussions regarding major issues such as the National Energy Policy. During such periods, "everything else on the agenda is tabled."

In addition, there is an "unwritten rule" in cabinet, confided an official: "Do not tread on others' territory." MLAs do not show much concern for or question nominees from other constituencies. Since the minister has consulted the premier and the appropriate MLAs prior to the meeting with respect to his recommendations there is rarely any discussion. As one official observed, "the cabinet process is relatively businesslike and routine."

Once the appointments have been formally approved in cabinet, the minister's office asks the Legislative Services branch of the Department of Advanced Education to prepare the Orders in Council (Appendix G). These Orders are the official documentation used to recognize board appointments and are "approved and ordered" by the Lieutenant Governor. They include: first, the name of the college governor whose term is expiring, name of the board and effective termination date; and second, the name of the new governor, name of the board, length of the term and date of commencement. Successful candidates are initially informally notified of their appointment by either the minister or their local MLA by telephone or in person. Formal documentation from the minister is sent to each new governor specifying the board they have been appointed to and the term of office (Appendix H). A copy of the Order in Council and a document entitled "Guidelines for Boards of Governors" are included in the package.

Many aspects of the current selection process are still in an emerging state. The minister plays a central role in all appointments. As his philosophy and that of his party change, the informal procedures which guide the process change accordingly. "It is all part of the evolving process of the politics of selection," an official explained. Since there exist few defined procedures, the minister enjoys considerable latitude with respect to proceedings. As a result, one person related, "the process varies with the circumstances." Any constraints on selection proceedings are placed there by cabinet which serves as a check and has the prerogative to put limits on the minister's freedom, though this authority is rarely exercised.

Criteria

While nomination and selection criteria are very similar, there are some differences. During the nomination phase, criteria focused primarily upon general eligibility factors such as competence, demonstrated ability and interest and dedication to public service. In the final selection phase, attention turns more to specific items and the needs of individual institutions. As one person disclosed, "The composition of boards is not coincidental. It is planned." The political connections of the individuals appointed determines the ultimate strength of governing boards.

Initially, the pool of candidates is reduced by the minister according to their political affiliation. Those displaying a philosophy in tune with government continue through the selection phase. They "do not necessarily have be active members in the party," cautioned an official, "but rather have a party champion." As a result, an individual confided, during the selection process the minister has two objectives in mind:

1. To recognize people important to the party or to recognize people important to the electorate. Both apply, but the latter is a sufficient credential.
2. To increase the degree of control government has over the operation of the institution by using party faithfuls.

Once these two objectives have been met, additional criteria are applied. Hence, candidates must first be known to either the minister or one or more of the MLAs to qualify for further consideration.

The remainder of the nominees are rejected. However, in some cases, upon recommendation of the local MLA, there is a deliberate effort to appoint one individual affiliated with a different political party. This is an attempt, an official divulged, to reduce the "political patronage often associated with government appointments."

Boards are considered to be autonomous governing bodies and thus, require diverse expertise to fulfill their responsibilities. As a result, there is a concerted effort by the minister to balance boards with respect to a narrow range of occupational backgrounds and expertise. In other words, "there are unofficial quotas on membership." In general, each board is composed of a financial expert or accountant, a lawyer, an educational administrator, an additional professional such as an engineer, a community affairs activist and two business people with at least one individual from private business. Both genders are represented, and where appropriate, regional representation is included. "There is also a cross-checking of backgrounds," an official elaborated, "in an attempt to find one individual who can represent more than one constituency such as an accountant from an outlying region or an engineer with a small business orientation." However, as a colleague confessed, "there is no effort to make the board representative of the general populace."

Special circumstances are addressed as well. An institution may be going through a developmental stage that requires a specific kind of expertise. In an expansion phase, the skills of an architect might be valuable. Alternatively, in times of retrenchment, the talents of a financial expert might be required. Sometimes, colleges place emphasis on the development of a specific program and MLAs and/or board chairmen may request a specialist in the area to guide the board through this phase. The minister attempts to accommodate such requests.

Once occupational balance and special needs have been taken into account, the focus shifts to more general criteria where a "reputational approach" is used to further reduce the number of candidates. "Demonstrated ability" or "success" in business and/or community affairs are major factors. Previous board experience is an asset.

On a more personal note, the minister also "wants people not intimidated by the postsecondary system," an official pointed out. One way to "guarantee this is to see if they [the candidates] have a university degree." While this credential is not always applied, it is "always in the back of the minister's mind," one person commented. An awareness of interest group pressure and the ability to "recognize 'noise' rather than sincerity," the ability to understand the "internal culture" of the college, openness and frankness in dealing with the president and other board members, as well as, community sense and dedication describe additional personal board member characteristics desired by government. In other words, an official summarized, individuals well-respected and prominent in the community who possess a commitment to the institution and are "strong enough to maintain their own identity and opinions . . . and not get submerged into a 'board personality,'" are sought.

Although colleges are provincial institutions, most members are drawn from the area surrounding the institution. Recently, the minister designated a hundred mile radius as the eligible geographic pool for a number of reasons:

1. People are more interested in the college located in their own community.
2. They are better able to assess the needs and wants of the community in which they reside.
3. Accessibility is improved making members more readily available for meetings and other college functions.
4. The image of an institution is enhanced locally if prominent people from the community are appointed.

5. There is a positive effect on labour relations as board members, staff and faculty live in close proximity to one another.

As one person advised, "don't make too much of the 'provincial' part of it. Most colleges tend to service a region."

Thus, while the rankings assigned by the minister to nominees take a number of factors into consideration there are established priorities. As reiterated by numerous respondents, "in reality" the two most important criteria are: (1) the local MLAs know the candidates and (2) they believe they are capable of doing the job and will not "embarrass or damage" the party. "As a result of the political activity of the individuals considered for the board," an official explained, "the MLAs have seen their [the nominees'] abilities, characters and personalities demonstrated in action." Government "favours individuals they know and have confidence in," another affirmed.

OPINIONS ABOUT THE SELECTION PROCESS

Following a discussion of nomination and selection procedures and criteria, the interviews turned to a more general discussion of the overall selection process. The purpose of these queries was to gain further insight into public officials' perceptions of the selection process. Opinions were obtained in relation to process descriptors, advantages and disadvantages of the current process, suggested improvements and future projections.

Process Descriptors

The terms used by respondents to describe the overall selection process reflected the lack of prescribed legislation and documented procedures and the subsequent latitude the minister has with respect to the nomination and selection proceedings. The most common descriptors included the terms informal, unstructured, open, unsystematic and flexible.

While there was general agreement regarding process descriptors, the terms were qualified by some respondents. "The process is not considered informal and unsystematic in the sense that it is haphazard or without consideration," one official testified. Government is ultimately responsible for board actions thus, appointments are taken very seriously. In some ways, another continued,

> the system is definitely systematic. To survive in politics it has to be systematic in an organizational sense. A haphazard approach would never last. However, it is not methodological. It is systematic in the sense that the same questions are asked regarding candidates all the time, the same criteria are used, for example, you must be a token PC or very neutral, the same people are asked to assist in the selection, and the same process is used each time.

Nevertheless, since such proceedings are not documented and most actions are guided by "implicit" procedures, the vast majority of officials agreed that, in many respects, the process was "definitely" informal, unstructured and open to the minister's discretion. However, this degree of freedom attributed to the process was also considered to be the most valuable aspect of current selection proceedings.

Advantages of the Current Process

The major advantage, cited by respondents, focused upon the flexibility of the current appointment process. As one official reasoned:

> The minister has to make judgments about a number of things. He needs room to maneuver. He needs the freedom to make decisions on diverse appointments . . . every college has different requirements. If you have more room, you should be able to make more right decisions.

Another individual concurred:

> The current process allows the composition of each board to be flexible. Each college and community has needs that are different from the others. . . .

> Flexibility allows for the process to develop over time . . . for choices to be made to see the college through periods of expansion and recession.

Consequently, a third person added, "board members can be more responsive to the community which is the prime purpose of boards . . . to represent the interests of the community . . . ."

A more "defined" system was viewed as detrimental to meeting the needs of diverse communities in changing times. The present process, an official pointed out, "enables people in government to take action where they think they should and not get paralyzed by the bureaucracy and paper work." Another agreed, "The less rules written, the more flexible the system, the more able the minister is to do what the circumstances call for . . . . He can keep all the options open."

The lack of prescribed criteria to guide selections was also deemed a strength of the present process. The use of what was termed "artificial criteria" was thought to "limit the process" by excluding people who were able to contribute to the institution, but did not fit into "predesignated slots." Thus, the absence of constraints on government actions was thought to be necessary to enable government to be responsive to the changing needs of colleges.

Disadvantages of the Current Process

On the other hand, this degree of freedom was not without its perceived disadvantages. The "potential for abuse" was the most common concern expressed by respondents. Since "politicians can do whatever they want," one official alleged, the opportunity exists for board appointments to be used exclusively for patronage purposes. In other words, "the lack of structure could serve to restrict board members to friends of the party as they [government] do not have to look beyond that group," affirmed an individual. Thus, another continued, "the diversity of ideas, concerns, interests, ideologies, and political backgrounds" would be severely restricted. Loyalties would be questioned, that is, would appointees exhibit "greater loyalty to the political wishes of the party or greater loyalty to the community they represent?" Such procedures, one person reasoned,

> could result in a board that is incapable of representing the community of the college, as well as, the college itself. This board would then replicate itself. . . . A weak board would be perpetuated. . . . It would be difficult to break up this trend once it started.

The lack of structure also places a great deal of responsibility in the hands of the minister and MLAs. As one official stated, "In the end you must rely on the integrity of the people making the decisions. In particular, the integrity of the minister is vital." Due to pressure from friends or colleagues, sometimes MLAs submit names in "bad judgment." They assume these will be caught by the system and rejected. In that way, "they are able to save face." However, the minister's office may, in turn, assume the MLA has "properly screened" the candidates and not investigate the matter further. Thus, the names "slip through on trust alone." Consequently, people may be appointed who do not have the required expertise. Unfortunately, "the political influence," disclosed one person,

> makes it easy to get people in and impossible to get them out. If they mess up you can't dump them. They have been appointed by government, therefore, it would be admitting to failure if they fired their own people.

Nevertheless, the respondents firmly believed that the strengths of the current informal, unstructured process clearly outweighed the weaknesses. "The 'proof is in the pudding,'" an official proclaimed, "Look around at how well the system has developed . . . fair, reasonable process . . . produces good people who have done a good job." "If the process was used frivolously," another insisted, "it would lead to more crises. . . . This has not happened." "Due to the commitment of MLAs, the minister and the board members, it is an operational success," concluded a third party.

Suggested Improvements

Although the respondents favoured the present selection process they did suggest improvements. In order to minimize the "potential for abuse," they felt some degree of structure was needed to guide the proceedings. First, they believed a procedure was required to avoid delays in filling vacancies and to ensure that there are "full boards all of the time." One way to accomplish this would be to select members "a full year in advance," proposed one individual. Since college governors serve prescribed terms of office, data regarding upcoming vacancies are easily accessible.

Second, the public officials interviewed believed that the nomination process should be more of a "public process." Advertisements were thought to be one way to assist in garnering community participation. In addition, they felt boards should be more involved in "supplying the criteria for selection" and identifying potential candidates. "The minister should make it clear that board members should discuss potential new members," advised an official. Some respondents also believed that board chairmen and college presidents should be consulted throughout all phases of the process including final selections. This kind of involvement, they remarked, should not be left to the "personal whims" of the current minister.

Finally, "some sort of feedback cycle" was recommended to determine the success of selection procedures. "A very low key . . . and open-ended process is required to assess how new board members are doing," an official advocated. If problems are discerned, this information could be used to evaluate current selection methods and assist in the development of improved procedures. The respondents were not suggesting the incorporation of what was termed "tight" rules or regulations, but rather some sort of broad guidelines that would inform people what role they could or should play in the selection process.

Future Projections

To conclude the interviews, respondents were asked to provide their projections of what they believed would happen to the current selection process in the next ten years. The majority felt there would be "little or no change [in procedures] if the political situation remains stable." However, they thought the criteria used in selections may need some modification. As one official predicted,

> colleges will become more involved in fund raising and entrepreneurial activities. This could have an effect on the type of board members selected. New skills will be required for yet another phase in the development of the community college system.

In addition, another continued, "the type of individual who serves on the board has got to have more capacity to understand societal change than his predecessors . . . vision as to why we need change. Otherwise, institutions will lag behind a changing society." Hence, decision makers may have to alter the kind of credentials they seek regarding prospective board governors.

On the other hand, officials agreed, if the present provincial government was to be replaced, the selection process might incur significant modifications due to the different philosophy of another political party. Similarly, they continued, "due to increased accountability demands as a result of the high expense of postsecondary education," the general public might become more interested in the governance of their colleges. In both instances, there may be a demand for increased public participation in board selections. If this happens, the most common alternative to the appointive process, as cited by respondents, would be elections.

However, the elective process was not considered to be a positive alternative to current procedures. Outside of "reflecting the democratic process" and possibly generating publicity for the college, officials were unable to discern other advantages to the elective process.

Conversely, several disadvantages were identified. The vast majority of institutional funding comes from government. Elected boards "with no responsibility to a tax base," one person alleged, "would set up a confrontation between elected groups [the board and government] which would not be good for the institution." As provincially supported institutions, colleges "have no specific constituencies except the political ones," another declared. Elections also leave board membership "up to chance," an individual added. One official offered the following:

> Appointments are there so you can zero in on talent and experience and decrease the political side of things. People who run in elections understand how to campaign but they do not understand the institution. . . . They are more issue oriented individuals. . . . The public can be triggered by an issue and people can be elected for the wrong reasons.

Rather than serve the students, another continued, elected individuals tend to serve the electorate and, as a consequence, are susceptible to pressure groups.

Thus, to most respondents the elective process was deemed inferior to the present method of selection. An official rationalized the issue as follows:

> There will always be a kind of evolution going on. At the very core of the appointment process will always be the political and the covert. . . . I'm not convinced we'd get better board if they were elected. . . . Who would profit from the change? Who wants a change?

"We have a proven formula," concluded another.

According to the projections offered by the respondents, barring a major political change or economic crisis, the current selection process will remain relatively unchanged for the next decade.

SUMMARY

This chapter presented the detailed data gathered from public officials regarding the process used to select Alberta community college public board members. The procedures and criteria used in nomination and selection procedures were described and opinions related to selected aspects of the selection process were provided.

The lack of prescribed legislation or documentation, official or unofficial, has given the minister considerable latitude with respect to selection procedures and has resulted in the development of implicit procedures and criteria to guide the selection process. When board member terms neared expiration, the minister and/or local MLAs asked board chairmen and their personal contacts in the community to provide nominees. Nomination criteria focused primarily upon eligibility factors such as competence, demonstrated ability and interest and dedication to public service.

Selection procedures were centred very closely in the minister's office. Based upon information received from nominators and collected during the background checks the minister ranked the nominees for each board. Final selection criteria included political affiliation, contribution to board balance and skills and expertise needed by individual institutions. MLAs and board chairmen were involved in both nomination and selection procedures, board members usually participated only in the nomination phase, and community participation was limited to those individuals designated as government contacts. Through all phases of the process, the department served only in an administrative capacity. Three ministerial approaches have been used to present nominees to cabinet including providing a prioritized list of all nominees, presenting three to five nominees or recommending one nominee for each vacancy. Prior to cabinet meetings the minister consulted with the premier and appropriate MLAs regarding his recommendations. Following formal cabinet approval, successful candidates were contacted by either the minister or local MLA.

Public officials cited flexibility as the major advantage of the current selection process. The absence of constraints on government actions was thought to be necessary in order for government to be responsive to the changing needs of colleges and their communities. Concurrently, the major disadvantage centred upon the potential for abuse created by such freedom as the opportunity existed for board appointments to be made exclusively for patronage purposes. In order to minimize these concerns, some degree of structure was recommended to guide selection proceedings. In particular, procedures designed to avoid delays in filling vacancies, increase board and public participation and evaluate current selection methods were suggested.

While minor modifications will continue to be made to selection proceedings, unless there is a major political change or economic crisis, public officials felt the current process would remain relatively unchanged for the next decade. Elections were not considered to be a practical alternative due to funding, constituency and quality control problems. The vast majority of officials firmly supported the present method of selection.

CHAPTER 5

A PROFILE AND PERCEPTIONS OF ALBERTA PUBLIC BOARD MEMBERS

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the literature postsecondary public board membership has been deemed stereotypic as personal and professional background characteristics of members were found to be very similar. In general, board members have been described as middle-aged, well-educated, financially successful, professional males. Concern was expressed by researchers in relation to the ability of these governing boards to assess and be responsive to the needs of their communities if members had similar backgrounds and experiences. In Alberta, there are currently ten community colleges and each has seven public board members drawn from communties within the province.

In order to determine the current status of board membership, a survey questionnaire was used to gather information from the total population of Alberta community college public board members. The instrument was part of a larger research project under the direction of Konrad (1986) which was designed to examine the shifting role of governing boards. Two sections of the survey instrument were used for the purposes of this study. The first part identified personal and professional background characteristics. The second section garnered governors' opinions about selected aspects of the selection process. Only thirty-six (51.4%) of the seventy public board members in the province responded to the questionnaire. As a result of this low rate of return, conclusions drawn from this part of the study must be accepted with caution.

The purpose of this chapter is two-fold. First, a demographic profile of community college public board members in Alberta is constructed. Then, the opinions of college governors with respect to selected aspects of their selection process are presented. Quotations used in this chapter denote direct comments of respondents.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

An analysis of personal board member characteristics (Table 1) revealed that Alberta community college boards members are predominantly male with 31 percent female. The majority (66.7%) are in their 40's and 50's. Table 2 provides information related to the residence of governors. Most (88.2%) have lived in the province for twelve or more years and 72 percent reside in the city in which the head office of the

TABLE 1
PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF BOARD MEMBERS (N=36)

Variable	Category	f	%
Gender	Female	11	30.6
	Male	25	69.4
Age	70 and over	1	2.8
	60 to 69	3	8.3
	50 to 59	10	27.8
	40 to 49	14	38.9
	30 to 39	7	19.4
	29 and under	1	2.8

TABLE 2
RESIDENCE OF BOARD MEMBERS (N=34)

Variable	Category	f	%
Province	12 years or more	30	88.2
	8 to 11	1	2.9
	4 to 7	1	2.9
	Under 4	2	5.9
College city	Yes	26	72.2
	No	10	27.8

college is located.

Educational level, occupation and income are often used to indicate socio-economic status in society. As shown in Table 3, 74 percent of public board members have received formal education beyond high school. While over half (57.1%) possessed a university degree, only one individual (2.9%) had not completed high school. The level of education is also reflected in the data related to occupation and level of income. Almost one-third (31.4%) of the governors described management as their primary occupation. The number of professionals (17.2%), homemakers (14.3%) and salespeople (14.3%) was fairly evenly distributed. Paraprofessionals (8.6%), farmers (8.6%), teachers (2.8%) and labour people (2.8%) represented a small portion of the total population. According to the data depicting total annual family income, almost half (45.7%) of the total population made $75 000 or more before taxes and an additional 40 percent reported an annual income of $50 000 or more. Board members constitute a well-educated, financially successful, professional group of individuals.

TABLE 3
STATUS OF BOARD MEMBERS (N=35)

Variable	Category	f	%
Education	Postgraduate degree	6	17.1
	Bachelors degree	14	40.0
	College or technical diploma	6	17.1
	High School graduate	8	22.9
	Less than high school	1	2.9
Occupation	Management	11	31.4
	Professional	6	17.2
	Homemaking	5	14.3
	Sales	5	14.3
	Paraprofessional	3	8.6
	Farming	3	8.6
	Teaching	1	2.8
	Labour	1	2.8
Income	$100 000 and over	7	20.0
	$75 000 to 99 999	9	25.7
	$50 000 to 74 999	14	40.0
	$30 000 to 49 999	4	11.4
	Under 20 000	1	2.9

Board members were also asked to describe their political ideology or orientation, as well as their provincial political party preference. As shown in Table 4, 77 percent identified themselves as possessing a conservative political ideology and 20 percent felt moderate more closely described their orientation. Nearly all (91.7%) of the members identified Progressive Conservative as their preferable provincial political party. The survey clearly shows the relationship between the political preference of appointees and the political party in office.

TABLE 4
POLITICAL IDENTIFICATION OF BOARD MEMBERS (N=36)

Variable	Category	f	%
Political ideology	Conservative	27	77.1
	Moderate	7	20.0
	Activist	1	2.9
Party preference	Progressive Conservative	33	91.7
	NDP	2	8.3

A review of governors' experiences (Table 5) showed that most board members were involved in various sectors of public and/or community life. The majority (72.2%) of survey participants were in their first term of office with 53 percent in either their second or third year of service. While 72 percent had not held any form of public office, 28 percent had participated at the municipal level. Conversely, most governors had been involved in party politics. The extent of involvment ranged from party membership (75.0%) to executive officer (30.6%) and campaign manager (25.0%) positions. There was only a single candidate for provincial office. Similarly, there was only a one participant at the school board level and only two had served on a college or university governing board exclusive of their present board membership.

Public board members were actively engaged in community affairs during the past two years. Over half (52.8%) were involved in service clubs, and over a third (36.1%) in each of civic advisory boards and/or business and professional associations. An additional 28 percent participated in church organizations, 19 percent were active

TABLE 5
BOARD MEMBER EXPERIENCE (N=36)

Variable	Category	f	%
Board Tenure	4 to 6 years	10	27.8
	2 to 3	19	52.8
	1	4	11.1
	Under 1	3	8.3
Public Office	Municipal	10	27.8
	Provincial	1	2.8
	None	25	72.2
Political Party	Party member	27	75.0
	Executive officer	11	30.6
	Campaign manager	9	25.0
	Candidate	1	2.8
	No involvement	4	11.1
School Board	Yes	1	2.8
	No	35	97.2
Other College or University Boards	Yes	2	5.6
	No	34	91.7
Community Activities	Service club	19	52.8
	Civic advisory board	13	36.1
	Business and professional	13	36.1
	Church organization	10	27.8
	Chamber of commerce	7	19.4
	Hospital board	2	5.6
	Other	14	38.9
	None	2	5.6
Other boards	5 or more	9	25.0
	3 or 4	7	19.5
	1 or 2	15	41.7
	none	5	13.9

members of the Chamber of Commerce and 6 percent served on hospital boards. More than one third (38.9%) also indicated involvement in other, unspecified, community activities. In total, exclusive of postsecondary governing and school district boards, 86 percent of governors had served on other boards over the past five years. The number of board memberships ranged from one or two (41.7%) to five or more (25.0%), indicating that college governors were active members of boards in non-educational sectors of the community.

In general, board members present a fairly uniform demographic profile. They are middle-aged, well-educated, financially successful, professional people who are long-time residents of the province and possess the same political philosphy as the party in office. They are in their first term of office, involved in party politics and very active in a wide range of community activities.

OPINIONS ABOUT THEIR SELECTION PROCESS

In this section, the opinions of board members with respect to selected aspects of their selection process are presented. In the survey questionnaire, respondents were asked to provide information related to their nomination and selection proceedings, indicate their extent of agreement with statements regarding the composition of nominating committees and the selection of boards, as well as, rate the importance of selection criteria and identify those items which they believe led to their personal selection to serve on their respective boards. In order to compare the perceptions of board members on selected questionnaire items, a series of t-tests were performed on item means.

Nomination Procedures

Alberta community college public board members are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. Of the thirty-six board members who completed the questionnaire, only 14 percent were actively seeking a position on their respective governing boards (Table 6).

TABLE 6
SEEKING A BOARD POSITION (N=36)

Variable	Category	f	%
Seeking a position	Yes	5	13.9
	No	31	86.1

Nevertheless, as shown in Table 7, all but one knew who had nominated them. In the majority of cases (66.6%) MLAs were identified as nominees, followed by board members (22.2%). The premier, current minister and a self-application completed the nomination sources. These data revealed that board member nominations were usually made by individual government officials.

TABLE 7
NOMINATION SOURCE (N=36)

Nominator	f	%
Current local MLA	16	44.4
Former local MLA	8	22.2
Former board member	7	19.4
Current board member	1	2.8
Other	3	8.3
Do not know	1	2.8

In the professional literature, nomination committees have often been cited as a recommended means of identifying candidates for office. Board members were requested to indicate their extent of agreement with statements regarding the composition of nomination committees (Table 8). A five-point scale, from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1), was used to ascertain the rating ascribed to each statement.

TABLE 8
COMPOSITION OF NOMINATION COMMITTEES (N=36)

	Percent (%)				
Nomination Committee	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Undecided**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
Local	2.8	36.1	22.2	30.8	8.3
Provincial	0.0	11.1	11.1	69.4	8.3
Government department	2.8	2.8	2.8	58.3	33.3

Governors were strongly opposed to provincial (77.7%) and government department (91.6%) committees. Interestingly, they were almost split evenly on their opinions of local nomination committees with an additional 22 percent undecided. In general, this analysis demonstrates that board members do not agree with the use of committees, regardless of composition, to submit nominations for board appointments to the minister.

Selection Procedures

In a similar fashion, board members were asked to what degree they were satisfied with the current selection process. Table 9 presents their responses using a five-point scale ranging from strongly satisfied (5) to strongly dissatisfied (1). Almost 80 percent were satisfied with the selection process involving public members.

TABLE 9
SATISFACTION WITH SELECTION PROCESS (N=36)

Variable	Category	f	%
Satisfaction	Strongly satisfied	4	11.1
	Satisfied	24	66.7
	Undecided	2	5.6
	Dissatisfied	6	16.7
	Strongly dissatisfied	0	0.0

Once again, using a five-point scale, strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1), respondents were asked to indicate their extent of agreement with statements describing various processes used to select public board members. As indicated by the means (Table 10), the majority (75.6%) believed board members should be appointed by government. A combination of appointed and elected members was rejected by nearly half (47.2%) of the group. Elections proved to be the most unpopular alternative, opposed by 72 percent, closely followed by local school trustee representation as 69 percent disagreed with this form of selection. Consequently, it appears as if board members are satisfied with current selection procedures. As one person commented, "We have a good cross-section of professions and philosophies. Elected boards have to satisfy their constituents, we try to serve the students first."

TABLE 10
SELECTION PROCESS ALTERNATIVES (N=36)

Selection Process	Mean	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
		Percent (%)				
Elections	2.22	2.8	11.1	13.9	50.0	22.2
Appointments	3.75	22.8	52.8	5.6	16.7	2.8
Elections and appointments	2.89	5.6	33.3	13.9	38.9	8.3
School trustees	2.17	0.0	8.3	22.2	47.2	22.2

Characteristics Deemed Important For Boardsmanship

Attention then turned from the selection process to selection criteria. Again, using a five-point scale, ranging from very important (5) to highly undesirable (1), board members rated the degree of importance they attributed to specific criteria in selecting members of governing boards. Table 11 presents the characteristics in descending order of importance by total mean responses. Of the nineteen criteria, the first seven were considered very important or important by 80 percent or more of the respondents. Interest in higher education, vision to move ahead with new ideas and time to devote to board activity topped the list. Conversely, characteristics labelled as unimportant by over 80 percent of governors included generally known to other board members, ability to make financial contributions and involvement in party politics. Interestingly, strong views about most matters and a middle-of-the-road point of view were rated as the most undesirable items. It appears as if board members do not wish their colleagues to be of a particular mindset. Some respondents added criteria they felt were important but were not included on the given list such as "personal relations capability," "team player,"

TABLE 11
CHARACTERISTICS DEEMED IMPORTANT FOR BOARDSMANSHIP (N=36)

		Percent (%)				
Characteristics	**Mean**	***VI**	**I**	**UI**	**UD**	**HUD**
Interest in higher education	4.51	54.3	42.9	2.9	0.0	0.0
Vision to move ahead with new ideas	4.47	52.9	41.2	5.9	0.0	0.0
Time to devote to board activity	4.39	38.9	61.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Involvement in community affairs	4.14	25.0	63.9	11.1	0.0	0.0
Business knowledge	4.09	22.9	62.9	14.3	0.0	0.0
Stature in community	4.06	13.9	77.8	8.3	0.0	0.0
Stature in vocation or occupation	4.00	20.0	60.0	20.0	0.0	0.0
Respect for teaching profession	3.86	14.3	57.1	28.6	0.0	0.0
Educational background	3.60	8.6	42.9	48.6	0.0	0.0
Business connections	3.43	2.9	31.4	62.9	2.9	0.0
Experience in education	3.40	5.7	34.3	57.1	0.0	2.9
Ability to make financial contributions	3.11	5.7	5.7	82.9	5.7	0.0
Political affiliation	3.09	2.9	14.3	74.3	5.7	2.9
Association with spouse	3.09	0.0	17.1	77.1	2.9	2.9
Strong views about most matters	3.08	5.6	22.2	47.2	25.0	0.0
Alumnus of the institution	3.06	0.0	14.3	77.1	8.6	0.0
Involvement in party politics	3.06	2.9	8.6	80.0	8.6	0.0
Known to other board members	2.97	0.0	2.9	91.4	5.7	0.0
A middle-of-the-road point of view	2.86	0.0	5.7	77.1	44.3	2.9

*** VI - Very Important; I - Important; UI - Unimportant; UD - Undesirable; HUD - Highly Undesirable**

"board experience" and "assertive individual." Thus, criteria deemed important for boardsmanship encompassed factors related to personal qualities, experience and expertise.

Personal Selection Criteria

From the selection criteria listed in Table 12, respondents chose a maximum of five characteristics which they believed were the most important in their selection to serve on their respective governing boards. Interest in higher education was identified as the most common characteristic (78.8%) followed by involvement in community activities. Time to devote to board activity, business knowledge and vision to move ahead with new ideas were also identified by over half (51.5%) of the group. On the other hand, alumnus of the institution, association with spouse and generally known to other board members were not selected by any of the governors.

TABLE 12
PERSONAL SELECTION CRITERIA (N=34)

Criteria	f	%
Interest in higher education	26	78.8
Involvement in community affairs	21	63.6
Time to devote to board activity	17	51.5
Business knowledge	17	51.5
Vision to move ahead with new ideas	17	51.5
Stature in community	14	42.4
Educational background	11	33.3
Stature in vocation or occupation	8	24.2
Experience in education	7	21.2
Respect for teaching profession	5	15.2
Involvement in party politics	3	9.1
A middle-of-the-road point of view	2	6.1
Strong views about most matters	2	6.1
Business connections	2	6.1
Political affiliation	1	3.0
Ability to make financial contributions	1	3.0
Alumnus of the institution	0	0.0
Association with spouse	0	0.0
Known to other board members	0	0.0

A comparison of the characteristics deemed important for boardsmanship and those identifed as leading to personal selections showed that the six highest ranked factors were identical in both cases. Hence, the criteria board members believed were responsible for their personal selection were also considered to be the most important characteristics for use in the selection of new members.

Reasons Given By Public Officials For Selections

Of the thirty-six respondents, twenty-two (61.1%) were given a specific reason(s) for inviting them to become a member of their respective governing boards (Table 13). An open-ended question provided the opportunity for respondents to disclose this information. The reasons given are summarized in Table 14. As illustrated by the data, diverse criteria were offered for the selection of board members. While business knowledge was identified by nine (28.1%) members of the cohort, it was often used in conjunction with other criteria as evidenced by the following two statements: "They required a professional person with an extensive background in business. Someone who could contribute without being aligned to a vested interest group in the community." "They wanted someone from my area with a rural background who had been successful in his own business." These open-ended responses were very similar to those which board members chose from a list of given criteria (Table 12). Thus, the reasons given

TABLE 13
REASONS GIVEN FOR SELECTION (N=36)

Variable	Category	f	%
Reason Given	Yes	22	61.1
	No	14	38.9

TABLE 14
SPECIFIC REASONS GIVEN FOR SELECTION (N=22)

Variable	f	%
Business knowledge	9	28.1
Interest in higher education	4	12.5
Provide regional representation	4	12.5
Involvement in community affairs	2	6.3
Administrative experience	2	6.3
Business connections	2	6.3
Stature in community	1	3.1
Educational background	1	3.1
Experience in education	1	3.1
Political affiliation	1	3.1
To give college direction	1	3.1
Previous board experience	1	3.1
Labour union background	1	3.1
Knowledge of the institution	1	3.1
Knowledge of graduate requirements	1	3.1

for selection by public officials closely paralleled the criteria board members believed were responsible for their personal selection.

Comparative Analyses of Board Member Perceptions

In order to compare the perceptions of board members in relation to various factors a series of t-tests were performed on the item means previously discussed.

Seeking a position. First, the differences between the perceptions of those who were seeking a position on their respective governing boards as opposed to those who were not seeking a position were examined (Table 15). Of the twenty-seven items included in the analysis, significant differences were found on the importance of four

TABLE 15
INDIVIDUALS SEEKING A POSITION VS THOSE NOT SEEKING A POSITION

	Means		
Category	Seeking	Not Seeking	Significance
Nomination Process			
Local committee	2.60	3.00	NS
Provincial committee	1.80	2.32	NS
Government department committee	2.00	1.80	NS
Selection Process			
Satisfied with selection process	3.40	3.77	NS
Elected	2.00	2.26	NS
Appointed	3.60	3.77	NS
Elected and appointed	3.20	2.84	NS
School trustees	1.80	2.23	NS
Importance of Characteristics			
Time to devote to board activity	4.60	4.35	NS
Interest in higher education	5.00	4.43	*
Stature in community	4.00	4.06	NS
Involvement in community affairs	4.40	4.10	NS
Vision to move ahead with new ideas	4.40	4.48	NS
Business knowledge	4.20	4.07	NS
Stature in vocation or occupation	4.00	4.00	NS
Respect for teaching profession	4.40	3.77	*
Educational background	4.60	3.43	**
Experience in education	4.00	3.30	*
Business connections	3.40	3.33	NS
Strong views about most matters	3.40	3.03	NS
Political affiliation	3.20	3.03	NS
Association with spouse	3.20	3.07	NS
Alumnus of the institution	3.00	3.07	NS
Ability to make financial contributions	3.20	3.10	NS
Involvement in party politics	3.60	2.97	NS
A middle-of-the-road point of view	2.60	2.90	NS
Known to other board members	3.20	2.93	NS

** $p \leq 0.01$
* $p \leq 0.05$

selection criteria. More specifically, board members seeking a position rated the characteristics associated with education significantly higher than those not seeking a position. Thus, it appears as if those seeking a position on the board felt board members should be more knowledgeable and supportive of education in general than those not seeking a position.

Satisfaction with the selection process. In the same manner, the responses of governors satisfied with the selection process versus those who expressed dissatisfaction were compared. T-tests revealed no significant differences among the twenty-seven items listed in Table 15 above. Therefore, it appears as if board members' perceptions of the selection process and the criteria deemed important for boardsmanship were not dependent upon the degree to which they were satisfied with their own selection process.

Reasons given for selection. Lastly, the differences between the perceptions of those who had been given a specific reason(s) for their selection as opposed to those who had not were analyzed in relation to the same twenty-seven items. As shown in Table 16, only one significant difference was discerned. Board members

TABLE 16
REASON GIVEN VS REASON NOT GIVEN

	Means		
Category	**Reason Given**	**Reason Not Given**	**Significance**
Importance of Characteristics			
Interest in higher education	4.36	4.77	*

* $p \leq 0.05$

not given a specific reason(s) for their selection rated an interest in higher education as a more important selection characteristic than did their counterparts. However, in general, both cohorts rated the information pertaining to the selection process in a similar manner.

SUMMARY

Based on data collected from a survey questionnaire, this chapter constructed a background profile of Alberta community college public board members and presented their opinions about selected aspects of their selection process. Demographic data revealed that board members are predominantly middle-aged males who are long-time residents of the province and reside in the city in which the head office of the college is located. They are well-educated, financially successful professionals in their first term of office. Ideologically, they view themselves as conservative and are members of the political party in office provincially. They have not previously served on school district or other postsecondary governing boards but are active members of boards in non-educational sectors of the community.

In general, governors were not seeking board positions, were nominated by MLAs and disagreed with the use of local, provincial and government department nomination committees. They were satisfied with current appointment procedures and rejected elections and school trustee representation as alternative forms of selection. Characteristics deemed important for boardsmanship and those identified as leading to personal selections encompassed a wide range of factors related to background and personal qualities including interest, vision, involvement, time, knowledge and stature. Specific reasons given by nominators for board members selections were of a similar nature.

Comparative analyses of selected item means revealed that members seeking positions on their respective boards felt governors should be more knowledgeable and supportive of education in general than did their counterparts. Conversely, board members' opinions about the selection process and the criteria deemed important for boardsmanship were not dependent upon the degree to which they were satisfied with their own selection process or whether they were given a specific reason(s) for their selection. Thus, board members not only possessed similar background characteristics, but they also shared many common opinions about their selection process.

CHAPTER 6

PERCEPTIONS OF SELECTED PUBLIC BOARD MEMBERS

INTRODUCTION

Despite the importance attributed to governing boards throughout the literature, the perceptions of board members are rarely solicited by researchers. As Dennison and Harris (1984:30) concluded, "It is instructive to gather the views of . . . members of institutional boards. . . . Their opinions, although rarely systematically assessed, deserve to be considered. . . . Boards offer an important source of information." The purpose of this part of the study was to determine the perceptions of board members in relation to their personal selection and aspects of the overall process.

Semi-structured interviews were used to garner the perceptions of fourteen Alberta community college public board members in their first term of office from four institutions. The purpose of these interviews was (1) to gather data not easily accessible through the questionnaire format, as well as, ascertain in more detail than that elicited by the survey instrument, the views of governors regarding background experiences and personal perceptions of their selection process; (2) to determine the extent of knowledge board members possessed with respect to their personal selection, as well as, the overall selection process as compared to that offered by public officials; and (3) to provide additional insights into the selection process by responding to queries based upon information acquired during interviews with officials.

This chapter presents board members' perceptions associated with personal selection information pertaining to nomination procedures, selection procedures and personal selection criteria. Opinions are also provided about various aspects of the selection process, including the importance of possessing knowledge of the process, characteristics deemed important for boardsmanship, the issue of community representation, process descriptors, advantages and disadvantages of present procedures, suggested improvements, as well as, views regarding elections versus appointments.

PERSONAL SELECTION INFORMATION

In order to determine the degree to which board members were knowledgable about their selection process, they were asked what individuals were involved in their nomination and selection and what procedures they believed were followed. As shown by the interview guides (Appendices B and C), board member responses were not guided by specific questions regarding the selection process as was the case with public officials. They were simply requested to describe the proceedings. Comparisons with the data collected from officials will be made in the following chapter.

All of the fourteen respondents were aware, to varying degrees, of the individuals involved and/or the procedures that had led to their appointment. Some described nomination and selection procedures in detail complete with the names of the individuals involved at each phase while others chose to outline only the major components of the process. A composite description of the most often cited board member perceptions follows.

Nomination Procedures

The respondents were first informally contacted, by those individuals who would eventually officially nominate them for office, to inquire if they were interested in the position. Some had mentioned their interest in a board appointment at previous unrelated events while others had not given any prior indication of their willingness to serve. A positive response then led to the request by the nominator for a curriculum vitae or resume depicting the nominee's occupation, community service background and previous board experience. This document, together with the formal nomination letter, was submitted either to the minister or the local MLA by the nominator. Governors believed that several nominations were usually forwarded to the minister for each board vacancy from numerous sources including private citizens, community groups, board members and local MLAs.

Of the fourteen respondents, all were aware of the specific individual who had nominated them for office. As shown in Table 17, nine (64.3%) indicated that they had been nominated by a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA). In the majority of these cases, the contact was made by local MLAs, but in two instances the minister was personally involved and in another case a professional colleague, who had also been board chairman, was closely involved. Of the four (28.6%) nominated by board chairmen, a local MLA participated in one case and a professional colleague, also a

TABLE 17
NOMINATION SOURCE (N=14)

Source of Nomination	f	%
Member of Legislative Assembly	9	64.3
Board chairman	4	28.6
Professional colleague	1	14.3

former board member, in another.

Selection Procedures

The next phase of the process, board members believed, was performed by the minister's staff. Their job, a governor related, was to "scrutinize and do the background checks" for each candidate with the primary purpose of discerning the qualifications of each nominee. Current board members, in particular board chairmen, some respondents indicated, were closely involved in the identification of the kind of expertise or skills they felt were required by their boards to meet the needs of their institutions. It was common, for instance, for boards to forward a request to the minister, via their chairmen or MLAs, for someone with a combination of business and academic skills. In most cases, governors recalled, such requests were fulfilled.

Then, an individual continued, the minister tried to match the credentials of the nominees with the needs of institutions at that point in time. In other words, one person indicated, an attempt was made to identify people who are able to "contribute something unique to the board," such as, land management expertise during an expansion phase. In addition, several board members commented, the minister makes an effort to avoid "unnecessary duplication" of skills and to determine what mixture of expertise would provide "the best blend" for each board. After he has determined the final nominees for each board, a respondent noted, his staff prepare a list of these individuals, together with the pertinent documentation for the minister to take to cabinet where formal selection and approval occurs.

Thus, governors perceived their selection to be based upon both the personal and professional expertise required by their respective boards at a certain time in order to meet the needs of their colleges. While formal selection and approval of candidates occurs in cabinet, they believed the minister actually made the final decisions based upon the recommendations of local MLAs and/or board chairmen.

Personal Selection Criteria

The personal and professional expertise identified by respondents as leading to their selection covered a broad range of variables. Table 18 displays the criteria the fourteen respondents believed to be responsible for their nomination and subsequent selection.

TABLE 18
PERSONAL SELECTION CRITERIA (N=14)

Criteria	f	%
Demonstrated capabilities	14	100.0
Involvement in community affairs	12	85.7
Previous board experience	10	71.4
Involvement in party politics	8	57.1
Business success	8	57.1
Maintain board balance	3	21.4
Knowledge of educational system	3	21.4
Provide regional representation	3	21.4
Prior indication of willingness to serve	2	14.3
Interest in higher education	2	14.3
Educational background	1	7.1

All of the respondents considered "demonstrated capabilities" to be one of the most important criteria leading to their selection. These capabilities were recognized by their nominator as a result of their work in one or more of the following areas: community activities, party politics, previous boards and/or business affairs. Involvement in community affairs was identified by twelve (85.7%), while previous board experience was indicated by eight (71.4%). These two forms of participation included a wide variety of activities ranging from coaching local athletic teams to organizing major international athletic events; volunteer career, employment and distress counselling; participation in the executive and/or board, in addition to the general activities, of service clubs such as the Kinsmen and Rotary clubs, and fundraising groups such as the Canadian Cancer Society, Heart Fund and YMCA. In addition, board members were involved in local sports clubs, school related and local community organizations including the Community Education Council, Museum and Symphony Boards, in addition to professional boards and associations.

While only eight (51.7%) believed that involvement in party politics, "at one time or another," had been a factor in their selection, as indicated in Table 19 all but one (92.9%) of the respondents had been involved in some way in party politics. Three (21.4%) had been campaign managers and ten (71.4%) campaign workers. However, five of these considered their involvement to be "light," as the extent of their participation included either delivering flyers or telephoning voters. This serves to explain the discrepancy between the number of respondents that reported to be involved in party politics and those that felt that it was a factor leading to their selection.

TABLE 19
POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT (N=14)

Nature of Involvement	f	%
Campaign manager	3	21.4
Campaign worker	10	71.4
No involvement	1	7.1

However, one respondent had the "uncomfortable suspicion" that the selections were based upon political involvement and longevity of political activity. "It is important to remember," another countered, "that these are all political appointments. . . . Someone prominent in the party knows us . . . . Political affiliation is important." Although the respondents did not deny the role of political affiliation in the appointment process, other factors were considered to take precedence in final selections.

Eight (57.1%) also thought success in their respective business operations led to their selection. Three (21.4%) felt their appointments served to fulfill regional representation concerns. Three (21.4%) thought they were selected to maintain board balance as they had replaced individuals with similar professional expertise. Three (21.4%) also believed their knowledge of the educational system, including grade school and postsecondary, played a part. Two (14.3%) had previously indicated their willingness to serve to their respective MLAs and one (7.1%) identified educational background as a reason for selection.

Thus, involvement in party politics was considered to be but one of numerous selection criteria. The proven abilities to do the job, as evidenced by community work and previous board experience, took precedence. To many college governors, party politics served only to "make them known" to the "right" people.

OPINIONS ABOUT THEIR SELECTION PROCESS

Following a discussion of personal nomination and selection procedures and criteria, the interviews turned to a more general discussion of the overall selection process. The questions posed were developed based upon the material obtained earlier from interviews with public officials. The purpose of these queries was to provide comparative data and to gain further insight into governors' perceptions of their selection process. Opinions were obtained in relation to the importance of possessing information related to their selection, characteristics deemed important for boardsmanship, representation concerns, strengths and weaknesses of the current process, suggested improvements, and finally advantages and disadvantages of elections as an alternative to the current appointive process.

Importance of Information Related to Their Selection Process

After the respondents had provided the information they possessed regarding their selection proceedings and the accompanying criteria, they were asked if they believed it was important for board members to know how they had been chosen. Table 20 indicates the importance board members attached to knowledge related to their selection process. Interestingly, eleven (78.6%) of the respondents felt that it was not important to know how they had been selected. The overall feeling of governors was summarized by two members: "Nominees have been asked if they would be interested in serving before their names are submitted, therefore, it is only important that they are willing to serve." "The process itself is irrelevant. It is more important what you do after you are there."

TABLE 20
KNOWLEDGE OF THE PROCESS (N=14)

Variable	Category	f	%
Important	Yes	3	21.4
	No	11	78.6

In other words, the "willingness" to do the job "as a community service" was considered by the majority of the board members to be more important than an awareness of their selection proceedings.

In some cases, there was actually perceived to be some risk associated with the possession of extensive knowledge about the process. According to one respondent, "There could be a danger of getting clones if the process was known to everyone as it would just become a case of filling in the blanks." Another added, "It might result in preconceptions regarding one's obligations. . . . It could lead to stereotyping." Similarly, caution was extended in regard to potential manipulation of procedures. As one board member insisted, "It's too easy to influence the process if you're aware of it." Thus, "it is an advantage," an individual concluded, "not to know how board members are selected."

While some admitted to curiosity regarding the process, they felt this emanated mainly from an "ego" perspective, but overall did not see any value in knowing what procedures were followed. It was considered to be more important to know the "expectations" of the job and to display a "willingness" to fulfill these obligations.

The remaining three respondents (21.4%) felt that it was important to be aware of the process mainly in terms of the criteria used to make the final selections. "All board members must be aware of the process," an individual declared, "but many do not know specifically why they were chosen, that is, what skills were looked at in their selection." Informing appointees of the criteria that had resulted in their selection could be used as a means of positive reinforcement. In other words, it would serve to specifically identify those skills and talents that were considered by the minister to be of value to their respective boards. As one governor imparted, "It is good to know from the confidence end . . . to know cabinet and the premier approved your appointment. . . . You want to feel you have earned the appointment."

Nevertheless, accessibility to information related to the selection process was not considered to be a problem by board members. According to one appointee, "All they have to do is ask their MLA or nominator." Thus, it could be concluded that since governors perceived information related to their selection to be readily available and not "secretive," it was not important to know how they had been chosen. Other factors, such as the desire to do the job, took precedence.

Characteristics Deemed Important For Boardsmanship

Several characteristics, as displayed in Table 21, were deemed important by governors in the selection of people to serve as public members on Alberta community college boards. In reference to the first item on the table, all of the respondents indicated the importance of new members contributing to board balance in terms of occupational backgrounds and expertise. In general, a combination of individuals with legal, financial, community volunteer, labour, academic, professional and private business backgrounds was recommended. Some board members also expressed the need for regional representation in colleges located outside of the major population centres. In this way, one person commented, a diversity of talents and skills could be obtained. Each individual on the board would then be able to contribute in a unique way because each one would deal with issues in a different way. "There should [also] be a conscious effort to make sure that there is not a duplication of backgrounds and talents," one board member added. Comments such as "diversity on boards is healthy" and "we don't want a stereotyped board" were common among respondents. "The board is the ultimate advisory committee," stated another governor, "Its job is to test waters and see how the community feels about issues." A broad representation of backgrounds was thought to allow the board to accomplish this task most effectively.

TABLE 21
CHARACTERISTICS DEEMED IMPORTANT FOR BOARDSMANSHIP (N=14)

Characteristics	f	%
Contribution to board balance	14	100.0
Involvement in community affairs	14	100.0
Time to devote to board activity	14	100.0
Ability to think independently	8	57.1
Interpersonal skills	8	57.1
Previous board experience	7	50.0
Open-mindedness	6	42.9
Vision to move ahead with new ideas	4	28.6
Ability to deal with government at a political level	4	28.6
Familiarity with entire educational system	2	14.3

While both sexes and a wide spectrum of ages were generally considered to be desirable in order to provide different perspectives on issues, for the most part, in reference to board balance, they were deemed relatively insignificant by the majority of respondents. As one board member cautioned, "I wouldn't go overboard. In the end, the selections should still be based on qualifications for the job." Sex and age concerns were seen as secondary factors to most board members.

The total group also believed that some type of participation in community affairs was essential for board membership. It served as an indicator of community interest and signified the desire to improve the community through participation. It also afforded the opportunity for participants to discern public opinion about pertinent issues. In addition, community involvement was viewed as a means of developing "some sort of positive community profile" or "credibility in the community." This was seen to enhance the acceptability of board decisions. According to one board member, "people [then] know who you are and know you have the capabilities to make those kinds of decisions."

Thus, to build a credible profile governors felt they must "show a strong interest in the community in one form or another."

Time to devote to board activity was another characteristic identified by all of the respondents. Reliability and conscientiousness were some of the descriptors provided by board members in this respect. Concern was expressed that this factor was often overlooked during the selection process.

The ability to think independently, was identified by eight (57.1%) of the respondents. As one person explained, we need people who can "think through things for themselves and question material that is handed to them." "We should be investigative, conduct our own research and ask questions when we do not understand material," another agreed. "Due to our busy schedules, there is just too much of a tendency to let things go," a third person added. Some respondents also pointed out the importance of recognizing and dissuading interest group pressure. "The primary role of the board," a governor advocated, "is to act as an independent group that can scrutinize . . . act as independent, public bodies." In other words, "board members should have their own ideas. . . ," concluded one appointee.

Eight (57.1%) also made reference to the need to appoint members who possessed well-developed interpersonal or "people skills." "You must realize that as a board member you are entering an arena of conflict . . . three levels of conflict . . . student, faculty and administration. . . . It is a very unusual environment," reasoned a board member. The job requires the ability not only to interact and communicate with these three groups, but, the general public as well. In particular, "good persuasive skills" were cited by some respondents as an integral part of well-developed interpersonal skills. "If you have a good idea, you have no where to go if you can't persuade people," one governor concluded.

Seven (50.0%) identified previous board experience as an important characteristic.

It represents, a governor pointed out, "the demonstrated ability to function at a board meeting and committee meetings." Often, it takes an entire year for new members to feel comfortable at meetings, another individual continued. If they possess these skills prior to their appointment, they seem to become productive members much sooner. In other words, "some past board experience of some kind. . . . Some knowledge of how a meeting is operated" was considered to be a pre-requisite for effective boardsmanship.

"The key characteristic," asserted one board member, "is open-minded people." Six (42.9%) respondents identified open-mindedness as an essential factor in governor selection. "The college," one explained, "is a massive institution with diverse needs and wants." "The atmosphere," another continued, "is so different from business. The approach is so different. You should not force the business world on the college." Thus, to many board members the college represented a foreign environment. Some sort of "flexible mindset" was considered imperative to cope with and respond to the demands of the institution.

In a similar vein, four (28.6%) pointed out the importance of possessing a vision of the future and the willingness to move ahead with new ideas. "We should be addressing issues such as, Where do we go? What are the future educational needs of the community?" one governor advocated. Board members "should be aware that these are changing times, tough times," another continued. "We should be able to see the whole not just the small parts . . . see the impact of a decision . . . not just the immediate but the long-term effects," a person explained. Descriptors such as creative, innovative and environmentally conscious were used to describe desirable characteristics.

Three (21.4%) respondents also believed it necessary "to have a philosophy in tune with that that the supporting group is reporting to." In other words, the political philosophy of board members should be similar to that of the party in office. "Government is elected by people to carry out a particular mandate," a board member related, "They should be represented in a broad way without directly influencing those they select to represent them. . . . Those appointed to boards should carry the party way." Another agreed, "The college should be run in tune with the government," but rather than the entire board being party affiliates, this could be accomplished by having "five members that think like the government and two citizen members that are qualified but not necessarily party people." In this way, the philosophy of the party responsible for the appointments would still be maintained. A third governor, while not advocating this party association, did emphasize the need for board members to have "the ability to deal with government at a political level." Since all funds emanate from this source, boards should be composed of "people who can and know how to approach government." The possession of similar mindsets was simply seen to enhance positive interaction between government and appointed college governors.

Lastly, two (14.3%) people indicated the value of being familiar with the entire educational system from public school through to university. Although it was recognized that it was not possible for all board members to possess this characteristic, it was felt that at least some should be knowledgeable in the area. In particular, personal experience at a postsecondary institution was seen to provide an information base from which to make decisions in relation to the college.

Similarities of Selection Criteria

An analysis of the characteristics governors deemed important for boardsmanship, listed in Table 21 above, and the criteria they believed were used in their personal selection, listed in Table 18 earlier in this chapter, revealed many similarities between the two sets of data. These similarities are depicted in Table 22.

Demonstrated capabilities, which was identified by all respondents as leading to their selections, combined with its counterpart business success could be seen to encompass many of the attributes deemed important for boardsmanship including ability to think independently, interpersonal skills, open-mindedness and vision to move ahead with new ideas. Likewise, personal selection criteria related to maintaining board balance and providing regional representation were similar to contribution to board balance which was identified as an important characteristic.

TABLE 22
SIMILARITIES OF SELECTION CRITERIA

Personal Selection Criteria	Characteristics Deemed Important
Demonstrated capabilities Business success	Ability to think independently Interpersonal skills Open-mindedness Vision to move ahead with new ideas
Maintain board balance Provide regional representation	Contribution to board balance
Involvement in community affairs	Involvement in community affairs
Previous board experience	Previous board experience
Involvement in party politics	Ability to deal with government at a political level
Knowledge of educational system Interest in higher education Educational background	Familiarity with entire educational system
Prior indication of willingness to serve	
	Time to devote to board activities

Involvement in community affairs ranked very high on both lists. Previous board experience was another common characteristic. The ability to deal with government at a political level could be connected to involvement in party politics. Educational criteria could also be combined to show a common perspective.

Only one factor from each set of data did not fit into the pattern. Both, an indication of prior willingess to serve, described as a personal selection element, and time to devote to board activities, an unanimous characteristic in the importance category, had no counterpart in the other section. While a prior expression of interest in boardsmanship was believed to be a factor in selection, it appears as if board members thought it to be an unimportant factor. Conversely, time to devote to board activity was considered essential to effective boardsmanship, yet none of the governors identified it as a determinant in their own selection. During the interviews, the majority of board members described themselves as extremely busy individuals prior to their appointment and, concurrently, emphasized the enormous time commitment of the job. However, they justified their decision to accept the position based on the belief that it was a community service and they possessed the skills to contribute to effective functioning of the board.

Thus, from the similarities discerned between the two sets of data, it can be concluded that with few exceptions, the criteria used to select college governors is closely related to the characteristics board members deemed important for effective boardsmanship.

The Issue of Community Representation

One of the most important characteristics identified by respondents for effective boardsmanship (Table 21) was the contribution new members make to board balance. Board balance was defined in terms of diversity of members occupational backgrounds and expertise. Similarly, the majority of respondents also defined community representation in relation to the diversity of occupational backgrounds of board members. Boards were believed to be representative of their communities if they were composed of individuals from diverse occupations and both genders. Alternatively, some board members felt that all boards are representative of their communities simply because all board members reside in the vicinity of the college. With respect to these definitions, board members saw current boards as representative of their respective communities. There was an attempt by the minister, governors believed, to make boards representative of the communities they serve. There also appeared, they added, to be a conscious effort to avoid duplication of backgrounds on most boards. Most respondents considered there to be a "reasonable balance" with respect to backgrounds and talents on their respective boards.

On the other hand, according to one governor, there was no attempt to make boards representative of their communities in terms of socio-economic status. In addition, other board members readily pointed out, in most cases there was also no deliberate attempt to represent other political philosophies. Thus, it appears as if most board members considered the issue of community representation almost exclusively in terms of occupational diversity and believed government did likewise.

Process Descriptors

During interviews with public officials, selection proceedings were repeatedly described as unstructured, informal and open to the minister's discretion. Board members were asked to provide their extent of agreement with these descriptors.

While college governors generally agreed with these descriptors of the process, some chose to temper the terms. "Unstructured" was substituted with "lightly structured" in order to denote a degree of regularity to the process. Since MLAs were notified of vacancies, they did submit nominations complete with resumes to the minister and cabinet did make the final appointments based upon the recommendations of the minister, some board members felt "lightly structured" was a more accurate descriptor. However, as one person argued, in many ways it is still an "ad hoc procedure. . . . It depends upon who's the minister. . . ."

In a similar fashion, "open" was qualified with "relatively open." The "political undertones" of the appointment process were thought by some respondents to decrease the accessibility of those who were not, in some way, perceived as party supporters. Others felt that while the minister seemed to enjoy considerable latitude during the process, he was perceived to have some restrictions placed on his freedom simply due to his association with the party in office.

There was little disagreement with the use of the descriptor "informal." As one governor concluded, "It certainly is an informal process, especially in regard to the nomination component." Yet, this degree of informality, lack of structure and openness were also perceived by board members to comprise the major strength of the current selection process.

Advantages of the Current Process

Throughout the interviews, the major advantages cited by board members focused upon the openness and flexibility of present selection proceedings. One respondent offered the following:

> It is best to have an open door policy to try to make the board more representative of the community. Once you close the process, you then have a closed policy and the selection process narrows. You then have the media and people in general saying that the average guy has no chance of becoming a board member.

The current process provides this openness as it "gives more opportunity for nominations to be made from different segments of society," affirmed another person. The minister has the freedom to build more balanced boards by choosing a "good cross-section" of people. In this way, one appointee reasoned,

> the potential is there to have different groups represented. Housewives that do not work provide lot of opportunity to see things from a different side rather than from a business angle. Political appointments, once again, will see things from another angle.

"All of this diversity," a board member further commented, "gives different perspectives on what should be in an educational institution . . . provides for outside influence." Since "every community has different needs for its own college," another remarked, each college requires its board members to possess skills and talents relevant to its own operation.

Not only does the opportunity exist to select individuals with desirable backgrounds, an individual disclosed, but it also exists "to eliminate radicals, that is, those that represent specific interest groups or those off on some tangent. . . . Instead you end up with a balanced, committed group of individuals . . . not hatchetmen or cross-bearers." The current method of selection provides the opportunity to choose "better qualified people who will serve the community rather than interest groups."

In addition, a board member continued, as institutions develop the kinds of expertise required change as well.

> A lighter structure allows for adaptation if there are certain areas of weakness. Colleges are now in a state of change. The building phase has ended and we are now in a period of more stability which requires a change of direction. As a result, people on the boards have to change, too. We now need strengths in financial management and business experience due to impending budget cutbacks.

The flexibility of the present system allows for these changes to be accommodated by selecting people who possess the expertise required by colleges at certain points in their development. As a result, a governor concluded, "you are able to meet the colleges needs more readily and effectively."

Disadvantages of the Current Process

While all of the respondents readily identified advantages to the current unstructured, informal and open selection process, some did not offer any disadvantages. Of those that did respond, the major concern focused on the potential for abuse. As one board member cautioned, "there is the possibility of the process being strictly political and used exclusively for patronage. . . . When people have contributed to a campaign they have expectations." Since there are no rules, regulations or even guidelines, the commitment and integrity of MLAs were seen by governors to play a prominent role in selection proceedings. "The MLA picks the people," a board member explained. "This is good if the MLA is good. However, the process makes it too easy for one person to pick from one group of people [the party faithfuls]." Although "any system would be politically motivated this particular process does run the risk of inbreeding," an individual agreed. Another person was more critical of the designated pool of candidates, "It's like potluck . . . you take what you can get." If the expertise sought by the institution cannot be found within the designated group of party supporters, the selections will still be drawn from that pool.

A second potential abuse of the process mentioned by some respondents related to the filling of vacancies. Conflicts occasionally arise, they reported, when MLAs, board chairmen and/or the minister disagree with board nominations. It takes time to sort these situations out and to get some sort of agreement among these politicians. As a result, delays in filling vacancies sometimes occur. "If the system works smoothly," a board member confided, "it's okay. It's when the conflicts arise that the lack of structure has an effect." In addition, some governors complained, vacancies are often not filled in advance. Thus, the opportunity is there, one remarked, to simply select friends because the vacancy has to be filled and there is not sufficient time to do a search. In this way, another remonstrated, you "get a bunch of people on the board that may not be totally competent" to make decisions involving large sums of money or decisions on educational matters about which they have very little idea and even less interest.

Nevertheless, board members firmly believed the advantages of the current method of appointment clearly outweighed the disadvantages. The flexible nature of the selection process was seen to allow the actors to accommodate the needs of colleges as they adapt to a changing external environment.

Suggested Improvements

Although board members expressed mainly favourable opinions in relation to their selection, they also suggested improvements. In this section, the specific suggestions offered by governors to improve current procedures are summarized in four categories related to public awareness, board involvement, candidate information and government conduct. There is no attempt to evaluate these recommendations.

Public awareness. Many respondents expressed concern over the lack of public awareness regarding board vacancies. Board member selections were seen to be closely associated with local MLA contact. As a result, a governor proposed, "in terms of expertise, they could be missing people as they are not politically active." In other words, an individual reiterated, they "could fail to identify potentially strong board members that are willing to contribute . . . but are being overlooked due to not being known by the MLA." Advertising was recommended as one possible solution to the problem. According to one person, this would make the public more aware of vacancies and help to identify people that "have a deep interest in the institution . . . but may otherwise never have an opportunity to indicate their interest." Other board members agreed. "The more 'open' the selection process, the better." "Good people, representing other political philosophies would add some flavour." "In the end, it would balance the board better."

Board involvement. Due to their proximity to the institution and the responsibilities they assumed as governors, board members thought they could offer government valuable assistance during the selection process. However, they felt that their potential contribution had been largely overlooked by government. Hence, to increase board member involvement the following recommendations were offered: (1) The minister should formally request each board to submit a description of the skills and expertise required to meet the needs of their respective colleges at that particular time. It should be accompanied by a list of potential candidates identified by the board as possessing the desired credentials. "If boards are expected to perform," a respondent asserted, "this information is necessary to assist in the selection of individuals who can contribute to the board." (2) In a similar fashion, candidates nominated from other sources should also be screened by the present board to see if they possess the needed expertise. Recommendations based on this assessment should then also be forwarded to the minister. Although board members expressed a strong desire to be more involved in selection procedures, most believed the minister should still be ultimately responsible for the appointments and did not wish to participate in final selections.

In addition, some respondents indicated the importance of first assessing current governor performance before new members were recommended. In this way, the strengths and weaknesses of current boards could be identified and appointments could serve to "fill in the required gaps." More specifically, it was suggested that the minister consult with board chairmen regarding the effectiveness of board members. "We do not need a formal system of evaluation," one governor clarified, "but we do need some sort of feedback cycle." The major concern in all of these suggestions appeared to be with finding a more effective way of identifying the best possible people to serve on community college boards.

Candidate information. A third set of suggestions related to the lack of information available to potential candidates. Many board members emphasized the need for "some kind of pre-learning program." One frustrated person stated, "No one ever takes the time to explain anything before the members are appointed." Another agreed, "There is no preparation for board members." Before nominations are submitted to the minister, potential candidates should be given detailed information regarding the responsibilities associated with board membership. They should "know the potential liabilities like the sacrifice of time," noted one person. They should be informed of the amount of homework that could be expected and the extracurricular activities they are supposed to participate in, such as, graduations and community liaison activities, continued a public member. "Candidates should go to a couple of board meetings to find out what is going on," an individual suggested. One respondent summarized the issue as follows: Potential candidates should be provided with "information in terms of time commitment expected and a very broad idea of the kinds of issues to be expected . . . a summary of the expectations and responsibilities of board members." Based on this information, they could then make a more educated decision as to whether to allow their nomination to be submitted to the minister.

In addition, one person recommended that in an attempt to discern the willingness of prospective members to contribute their time, candidates should be questioned as to why they want to become board members. This kind of "preamble could prevent people from getting in over their heads or getting into an area they are not interested in," explained a governor. Many respondents felt that a lack of information pertaining to job expectations was the leading factor in the selection of what was described as "weak" board members, that is, those not able to fulfill their board responsibilities.

Government conduct. Finally, some respondents offered suggestions with respect to the way in which government handled aspects of the appointment process. Disappointment was expressed in relation to the delays in filling vacancies. "To ensure immediate continuity vacancies must be filled right away," a board member emphasized. Since government is aware of term expiration dates, governors were not sympathetic to the reasons politicians gave for the delays.

In addition, "government protocol could be improved in other areas," maintained a board member, "The way people find out about appointments is not very well structured. . . . It is very informal." According to the respondents, notification can be received from the minister, MLA or board chairman by telephone, in person or letter. Since the Orders in Council are not received immediately, this lack of consistency often left governors wondering if their selections had really been finalized. To alleviate such concerns, suggestions for improvement included formalizing and standardizing the initial notification of final selections.

Elections Versus Appointments

Although board members offered several suggestions to improve their selection process, none recommended the use of elections. Throughout the literature, elections were cited as the most popular alternative to the appointive process. Yet, as shown in Table 23, most (85.7%) governors were opposed to the idea of electing Alberta

TABLE 23
ELECTIONS (N=14)

Category	f	%
Opposed to the elective process	12	85.7
Neutral	2	14.3
In favour of the elective process	0	0

community college public board members and only two described themselves as "neutral." The degree of opposition ranged from "deadly opposed" to a perception of "no value to an elected board." The major deterrant cited by respondents to such a process involved present funding arrangements. Currently, community college funding comes directly from government. There is no provision in the Colleges Act (1985) for college funding to be tied to any tax base. As one one person speculated, "If they [board members] had the power to raise taxes . . . these types of activities might be of some value. The way things are now I do not see any purpose in electing people."

Advantages of elections. However, board members concerned with the lack of access to public board positions did suggest that elections may be one avenue for individuals who do not have the "right" contacts established to seek a board position. The elective process also provides the opportunity for the general populace to select their community college board members, some respondents pointed out. A positive consequence of such action, one governor proposed, "might be to generate more public awareness of what postsecondary institutions are all about."

Disadvantages of elections. Even though some advantages of elections were offered, the majority of respondents cited numerous disadvantages. The wide-ranging responses are summarized in five categories related to matters of expense, politics, board composition, constituency and funding.

First, elections were seen to be expensive undertakings in terms of time and money. Since governors were unable to discern the value of elected boards over appointed boards, both costs were considered unwarranted. The time commitment required by an election was also seen to act as a deterrant to many capable individuals who would do the job if approached personally, but would not consider running a campaign. To many board members, elections were considered to be popularity contests with little regard for the capabilities of the candidates or the needs of the institution.

Next, some governors, while recounting their discussions with American elected board members, were "suspicious of the hidden purposes" behind the desire for boardsmanship when "vast sums of money were used to get people elected to nonpaying positions." "Appointments," one individual contended, "result in people doing the job as a contribution to the community." Conversely, "colleagues in the States have said that [elected] positions are used for future political objectives . . . stepping stones to bigger and better things," a board member recollected. As a result, another alleged, "people might run for the wrong reasons." For instance, there is a risk of candidates representing particular interest groups rather than the welfare of the students. Similarly, "if elections were held the same time as the provincial election the process becomes controlled by particular factions," a governor added. Those elected would probably be connected to the victorious party. In this way, charged a public member, the elective process has the potential of becoming even more political than the appointive process. At least the current process provides an opportunity for a deliberate mixture of political persuasions to be represented.

Thirdly, board composition, governors believed, would be left entirely to chance if elections were put into effect. There would be no means of balancing the membership, controlling the unnecessary duplication of backgrounds or making the board representative of the community it serves. The continuity of board membership would be disrupted and control over the rotation of appointments would be lost, some members noted. Appointments are well-staggered now, a governor pointed out, with a mixture of experienced and inexperienced individuals. "There is a chance with elections of wiping the slate clean every term or you could get the opposite situation and have someone there for a hundred years," another remarked. Both cases were considered undesirable. "Elections would not bring forth the best people," one respondent argued. "The elite in our country do not go into political positions. . . . The best people are not running." As one person summarized, elections are "expensive propositions in terms of time, effort and politics . . . and they do not guarantee the capabilities of those selected."

A fourth concern centered upon the constituency problem. Colleges are provincial institutions and, as such, do not serve specific geographic regions. Hence, the identification of boundaries was seen, by board members, to be a major obstacle confronting elective procedures.

Finally, since government is the primary funding source, a governor rationalized, "it is essential to maintain a nonadversarial approach and understanding of the position. This does not usually happen with elected officials." Often candidates seeking election design platforms opposing government or emphasizing the need for reform. The maintenance of a close and positive relationship with government, respondents believed, could be more easily accomplished through people selected by government. Appointed boards were seen to be less controversial.

SUMMARY

This chapter presented the detailed data gathered from selected board members regarding their perceptions of their selection process. Personal selection information revealed that board members possessed considerable knowledge about selection procedures. In varying degrees of specificity, the process was described by the majority of appointees. MLAs and, to a lesser degree, board chairmen were identified as the major source of nominations. Local MLAs were thought to play major roles in all phases of the selection process and had a substantial impact on final selections. Although board members felt they could obtain as much information about the selection process as they desired through their MLAs, most thought such information was unimportant. They were more concerned about people fulfilling the responsibilites of the job once appointed.

While the role of political affiliation was not denied, governors perceived their selection to be based upon capabilities demonstrated through community activities, previous board work and/or business affairs.

Several characteristics were deemed important for board membership including occupational backgrounds that would contribute to board balance, involvement in community affairs and time to devote to board activities. A high degree of similarity existed between the criteria believed to be responsible for personal appointments and the characteristics deemed important for boardsmanship. Board members considered the issue of community representation almost exclusively in terms of occupational diversity and believed government did likewise. The majority of governors agreed that the current selection process was informal, "lightly structured," and "relatively open" to the minister's discretion. The major advantages of such procedures included the flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances, the opportunity to select "better qualified" people and to ensure some type of board balance. Disadvantages focused on the potential for abuse as the opportunity existed for board appointments to be used exclusively for patronage purposes. Suggestions for improvement related to increased public awareness regarding board vacancies, more board member involvement in the selection process, increased preparation of potential candidates and more attention to government conduct in relation to the filling of vacancies and the notification of appointments.

None of the respondents favoured the elective process as an alternative to the appointive mode. While they did point out that it could ameliorate accessibility difficulties, the disadvantages were perceived clearly to outweigh the advantages. Expense, in terms of time and money, increased politicization, uncontrolled membership, constituency and funding concerns were cited in opposition to the elective alternative.

In conclusion, public board members offered valuable insights into their selection process. Those interviewed for the purposes of this study seemed to be deeply concerned about the selection procedures currently used and were willing not only to identify problems with the process but to offer potential solutions. Throughout the interviews, they displayed a strong sense of community responsibility and appeared committed to the development of their respective institutions. Their willingness to cooperate with the research and their interest in the results of the study served to demonstrate their desire not only to become more knowledgeable about their selection process, but also to become more informed about issues related to community college governance in general.

CHAPTER 7

A COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the data collected through interviews and the survey questionnaire are integrated to afford an interpretation of the entire selection process, rather than focusing on separate data as in the previous chapters. Wherever possible, the elements of the selection process are related to the conceptual model of the Dynamic Political System (DPS) to provide an interpretation or explanation of specific aspects of the process. The purpose of this chapter is to develop a comprehensive understanding of the process used to select Alberta community college public board members. The data are organized under the headings of environment, nomination procedures, selection procedures and outputs in accordance with the conceptual framework described in Chapter 3.

The process used to select Alberta community college public board members functions within a dynamic political system. As such, the process is not static, but changes over time in response to shifting environmental influences.

THE ENVIRONMENT

The purpose of the DPS is to select community college public board members. While the DPS maintains its own boundaries, it is surrounded by and interacts with other social systems in the surrounding environment. As a result, the DPS is subject to influences or inputs from these other systems termed environmental demands and environmental support. Demands are expressions of opinions by members of the public regarding the allocation of values and take the form of suggestions or recommendations. Support refers to the support given by the public to government and can be measured by the number of people who endorse the current political party in office. Without support for those holding office, demands could not be processed. For the purposes of this study, the environment consists of the actors, processes and information outside the DPS that have an impact on the initiation, development and outputs of the system. Changing environmental conditions influence the demands and support placed upon the DPS. In turn, the demands and support influence nomination and selection procedures.

The following two sections of this chapter describe the environmental conditions surrounding the DPS that influence first the demands and then the support. These conditions are summarized in Figure 4 according to three categories termed societal influences, Canadian influences and community influences in order to show their effect upon the demands and support of the system. The descriptions begin with more generalized societal influences and become increasingly more specific as the immediate enviroment of the DPS is described. In this study no attempt was made to determine the extent of these influences. The purpose of these two sections is simply to acknowledge the presence and possible consequences of such factors upon the DPS.

Environmental Conditions Influencing Demands

Recently, Worth (1986b), while addressing members of school boards, identified a number of forces responsible for the changing enviromental conditions surrounding school boards in Canada. These forces also affect governing boards in higher education and consequently, influence the process used to select board members. In reference to the current research, these forces affect the demands placed upon the DPS. The influences that appear to have an affect on society in general, termed societal influences

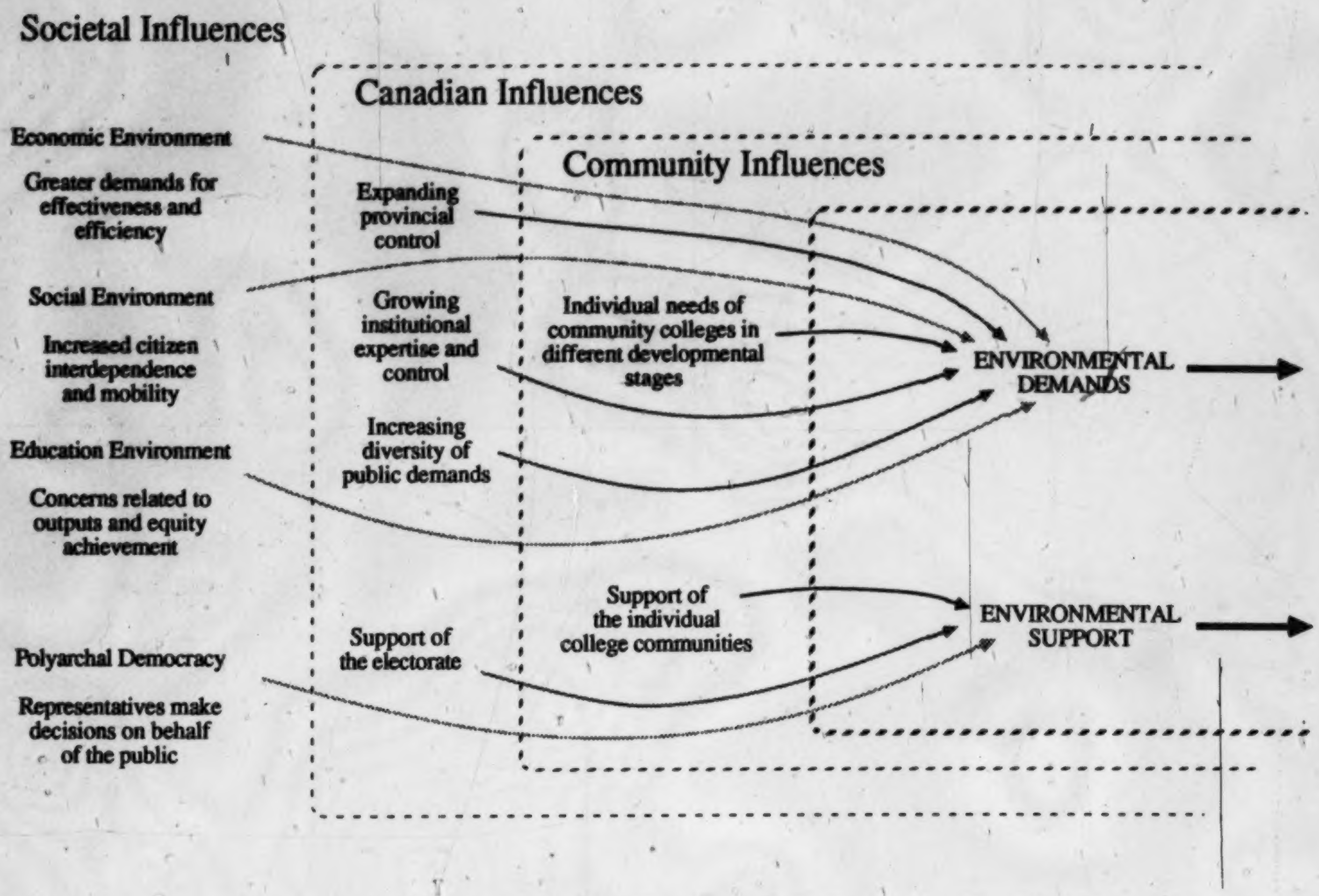
Societal Influences
Economic Environment
Greater demands for effectiveness and efficiency
Social Environment
Increased citizen interdependence and mobility
Education Environment
Concerns related to outputs and equity achievement
Polyarchal Democracy
Representatives make decisions on behalf of the public
Canadian Influences
Expanding provincial control
Growing institutional expertise and control
Increasing diversity of public demands
Support of the electorate
Community Influences
Individual needs of community colleges in different developmental stages
Support of the individual college communities
ENVIRONMENTAL DEMANDS
ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORT

Figure 4 Environmental Conditions Influencing the DPS

in Figure 4, included:

> an economic environment which demands greater efficiency and effectiveness, a social environment characterized by citizen interdependence and mobility, and an educational environment in which traditional concerns about inputs and access to opportunity are being supplanted by those related to outputs and equity in achievement (p. 2).

More specifically, Worth (1986b) described three other forces considered to be even more pervasive, which are referred to as Canadian influences in Figure 4: (1) *Expanding provincial control.* The province exercises its control over colleges by manipulating the resource dependency of boards. Since colleges are provincially funded, boards are likely to comply with government preferences. (2) *Growing institutional expertise and power.* Faculty and students are more "aware of the community's social and economic dependence" on their abilities and aspire to share the power and decision making of governing boards. This is evidenced by the inclusion of faculty and student representation on Alberta college boards. In addition, support staff representation has recently been included on boards, thus further increasing institutional representation. (3) *Increasing diversity of demands.* According to Worth (1986b:3),

> cultural pluralism, and higher levels of education and aspiration, have encouraged the expression of a wider range of preferences to be accommodated. Thus, the stage is set for an intensification of interest-group activity and the articulation of more conflicting demands. . . . When diversity of demand is not accommodated or contained, it becomes the stimulus for change in both the membership of the board and the manner in which it operates.

In addition, the immediate environment surrounding the DPS is affected by the individual needs of the ten community colleges in the province termed community influences in Figure 4. Worth (1975:10), in describing the work of Heron (1972), noted that while many formal organizations tended to follow a similar developmental pattern, they progressed through these phases at varying rates. As discussed in Chapter 1, Alberta community colleges appear to be at different developmental stages at this point in time. As a result, the needs and wants of these institutions can be expected to differ. Thus, the desired skills and expertise of individuals appointed to governing boards may vary accordingly. This may have an effect on the process used to select college governors.

Environmental Conditions Influencing Support

Support provides some kind of stability for the system in terms of rules and structures through which demands can be processed. Since the provincial government is a mechanism of polyarchal democracy, MLAs are given the support of their constituencies to make decisions or make authoritative allocation of values on their behalf. Environmental support pertains to the support given by the electorate to those individuals possessing the political power to make decisions. In reference to individual colleges, it also pertains to the support given by the local communities to government to make decisions about their colleges. In Figure 4, the mechanism of polyarchal democracy is considered to be a societal influence, the support of the electorate a Canadian influence and the support of the individual communities which the colleges serve a community influence. A rough measure of support can be obtained by determining the number of individuals supporting the political party in office compared to those opposing the party, the intensity of their beliefs, coupled with their capacity to express their feelings which is usually determined by their prominence in the community and their relationship to the political party in office. Hence, the actors in the environment outside the system provide support for the DPS to function.

The Boundary Surrounding the DPS

In order to differentiate the DPS from the environment, an artificial boundary is established. The boundary or gateway becomes the site at which interactions between the DPS and the environment occur. Public officials serve as gatekeepers and decide what is or is not permissible in the system. As depicted in Figure 5, they regulate the content of the demands on the system, limit the volume, and process the demands. Since the gatekeepers are products of their society, Easton (1966:10) explained, societal norms may regulate what they will allow to enter the system. The demands that are found to be appropriate for additional processing are allowed to continue through the system. The remainder are ejected from the system.

As environmental conditions change, the kinds of demands allowed to enter the system are expected to change accordingly. When this does not occur, stress results and the existing system may be threatened with a loss of support. In order to alleviate the stress, the system must adapt to the perceived changes. Thus, the boundary or gateway is not static, but shifts over time to include or exclude actors and reacts to changing environmental demands and support as the system evolves.

The process used to select community collge public board members occurs within the DPS. Selection results from a process incorporating an initial nomination phase and a final selection component which explain the "how" of recruitment by describing the sequential pattern of interaction whereby individuals are appointed to community college governing boards. In order to determine this pattern of interaction, the perceptions of public officials, as well as board members themselves, are needed to ascertain the steps in the process and to determine the actors involved. As Easton (1966:11) explained,

> the existence of a political system must include a plurality of political relationships through which individual members are linked to each other and through which the political objectives of the system are pursued. The members are drawn together because they participate in a common structure and set of processes, however, tight or loose the ties may be.

An analysis of the information obtained from the actors leads to the determination of linkages among those in the system which translates into a more indepth understanding

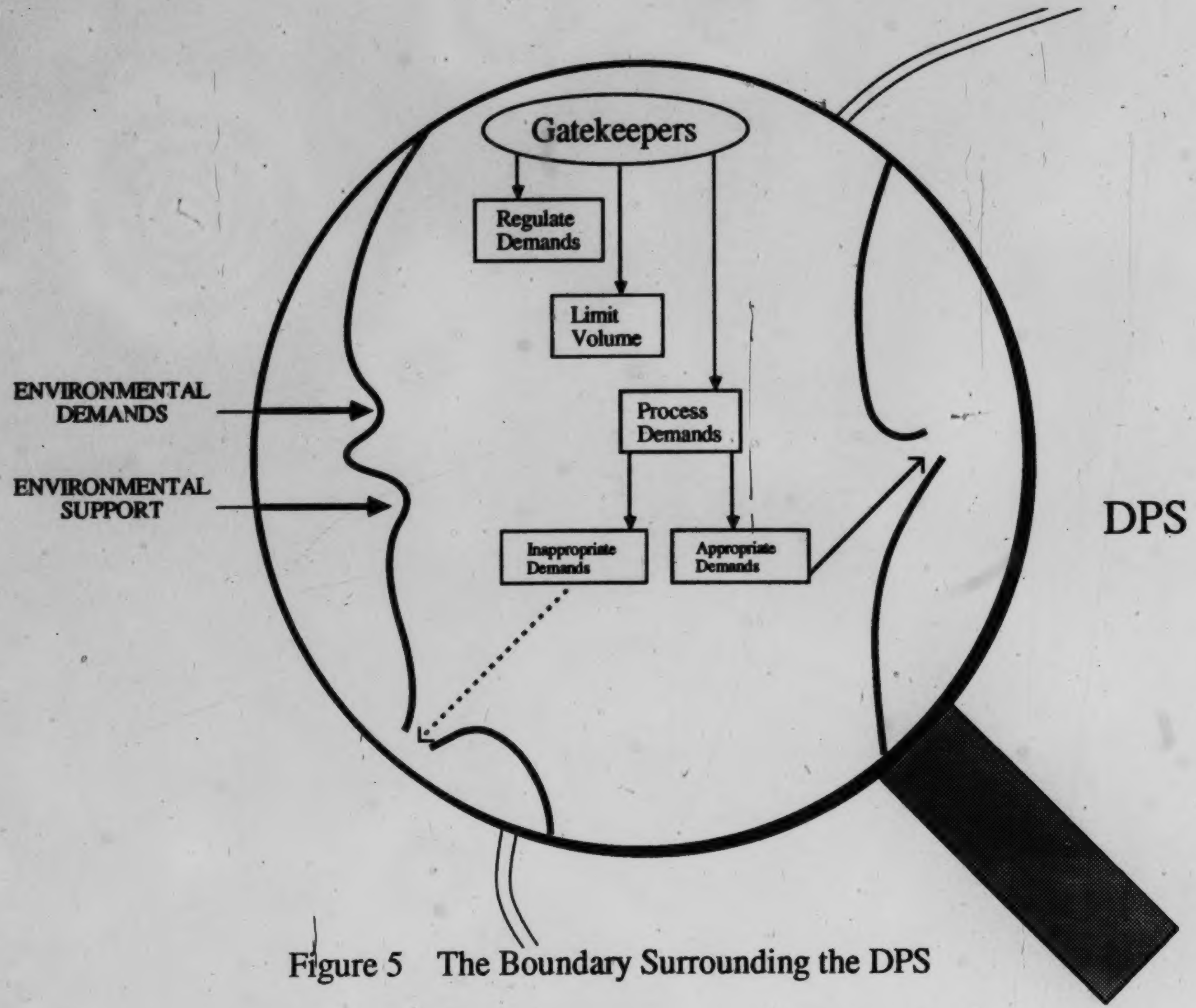
Gatekeepers
Regulate Demands
Limit Volume
Process Demands
Inappropriate Demands
Appropriate Demands
ENVIRONMENTAL DEMANDS
ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORT
DPS

Figure 5 The Boundary Surrounding the DPS

of the process under analysis.

The following two sections of this chapter describe the process that takes place inside the DPS -- the selection of Alberta community college public board members. This process is composed of two major phases. First, nomination procedures and the pertinent eligibility criteria are presented. Then, selection procedures and the accompanying eligibility criteria are discussed.

NOMINATION PROCEDURES

In accordance with the Colleges Act (1985), Alberta community college board members are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor by an Order in Council. There is no prescribed legislation or documentation, official or unofficial, outlining the process used in the selection of board members. Due to the lack of documented procedures, the minister assigned to the department at a particular time enjoys considerable latitude with respect to nomination and selection procedures. However, since the inception of the Colleges Act in 1969, unofficial procedures have evolved to guide board selections. In Chapter 4 these unofficial procedures were described by public officials. Chapter 6 presented the perceptions of selected board members in their first term of office. While the data provided by public officials were more extensive in most cases, the content of the two sets of data closely paralleled one another and is presented in a comprehensive form in the following sections.

The Actors and the Process

As depicted in Figure 6, nomination procedures are initiated when board member terms near expiration. Since the Colleges Act (1985) designates board member terms of office, government officials know when board vacancies are pending. Department

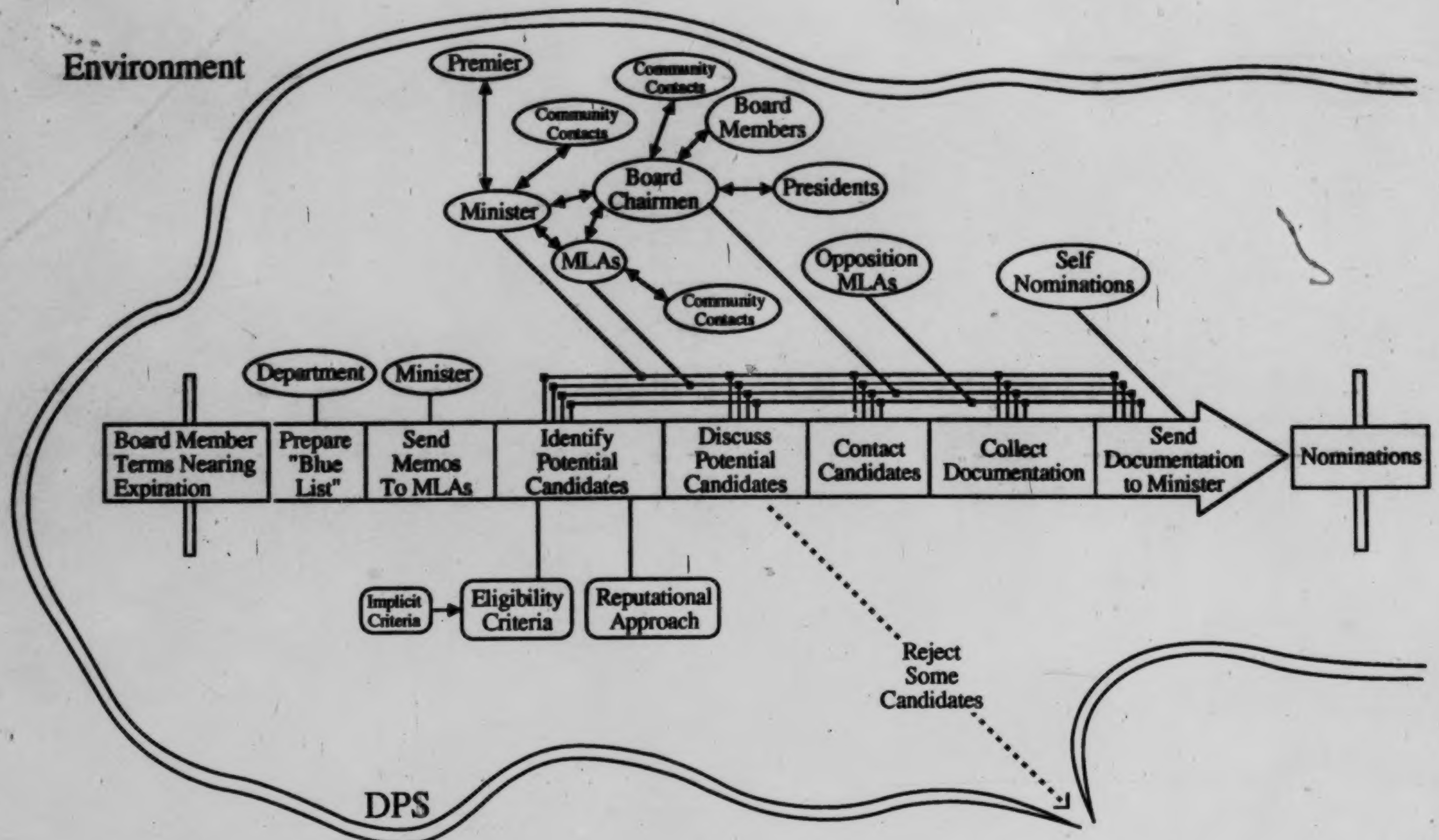
Environment
Premier
Community Contacts
Community Contacts
Board Members
Minister
Board Chairmen
Presidents
MLAs
Community Contacts
Opposition MLAs
Self Nominations
Department
Minister
Board Member Terms Nearing Expiration
Prepare "Blue List"
Send Memos To MLAs
Identify Potential Candidates
Discuss Potential Candidates
Contact Candidates
Collect Documentation
Send Documentation to Minister
Nominations
Implicit Criteria
Eligibility Criteria
Reputational Approach
Reject Some Candidates
DPS

Figure 6 Nomination Procedures

officials prepare a list outlining the number, type and location of openings. This information is incorporated into a composite list for cabinet, termed the "Blue List," which describes all upcoming vacancies on government appointed boards and agencies in the province.

The minister then sends memos (Appendix F) to MLAs in the immediate vicinity and surrounding region of the colleges requesting names and resumes of candidates. Usually he requests a minimum of three or four nominees for each vacancy. Resumes outlining occupation, previous elected or appointed positions, public or community service and any other pertinent information are required to support nominations. Items addressing personal matters such as political party preference or current state of business affairs are not included. This information is collected informally usually by means of a telephone call or personal meeting with the nominator or referees at a later stage in the selection process.

Potential candidates are identified by a variety of people. Current boards, in particular board chairmen, are actively involved in nomination proceedings as they are expected by government to assess the needs of the community and the college. Either MLAs approach their respective board chairmen to discuss the kinds of people that are required by their boards to meet the needs of their colleges or the minister personally contacts the chairmen to request nominees. The premier, minister, MLAs and board chairmen also approach personal contacts in their constituencies to suggest prospective members and also to act as informal referees. Most of these contacts are trusted business and/or political associates. In some colleges the president is intimately involved in garnering nominees. Some people nominate themselves. Opposition MLAs, especially if the college resides in their constituency, participate as well.

Discussions regarding potential nominees are conducted informally and are not committed to paper. Often board members exchange views among themselves. The minister, MLAs and board chairmen approach their personal contacts in the community to ascertain more information about potential candidates. Based upon the information they receive, they reject some potential candidates at this point in the process.

Those individuals that are still considered for boardsmanship are then contacted by the people who will eventually officially nominate them for office to inquire if they are interested in the position. The minister, MLAs and board chairmen are the most common official nominators. While some prospective candidates give prior notice of their interest in a board appointment, most do not give any prior indication of their willingness to serve.

A positive response by the candidate then leads to a request by the nominator for a curriculum vitae or resume depicting the nominee's occupation, community service background and previous board experience. This document, together with the formal nomination letter, is either submitted directly to the minister by the nominator or via the local MLA.

Criteria

Other than Canadian citizenship and Alberta residency, there are no prescribed criteria in the Colleges Act (1985) for board membership. However, "implicit" criteria are used by the premier, minister, MLAs, board chairmen and other board members to designate candidates for office. Nomination criteria are general in nature and focus primarily upon eligibility factors such as competence and demonstrated ability in business affairs, party politics and community activities. In order to discern the degree to which these characteristics are prevalent in potential candidates, a "reputational approach" is used.

Board members in their first term of office concurred with public officials. They listed demonstrated capabilities, which were recognized by nominators as a result of their work in community activities, party politics and business affairs as the most important factor leading to their nomination and subsequent selection. As illustrated by the questionnaire data (Table 5), most board members were actively engaged in community affairs, party politics and other sectors of public life. Similarly, Almond and Powell (1978:123) found that the selection of individuals for elite roles is often based upon previous experience, usually of a political or other socially based nature. These lesser roles often constitute the channels through which individuals are recruited to more elite roles.

On the other hand, when board members were asked to rate the degree of importance they attributed to specific criteria on the survey instrument (Table 11), they chose interest in higher education, vision to move ahead with new ideas and time to devote to board activity ahead of factors related to community involvement and business credentials. In addition, they rated involvement in party politics as an unimportant characteristic. Yet, when asked to select those items which they believed were the most important in their selection to serve on their respective governing boards (Table 12), community involvement and business knowledge were identified as often as interest and time. Interestingly, those seeking a position on their respective boards rated the characteristics associated with education significantly higher than did those not seeking a position. It appears as if those seeking a position on the board felt board members should be more knowledgeable and supportive of education in general than those not seeking a position.

Thus, the criteria designated by public officials as determining nominees were very similar to the criteria board members felt had resulted in their nominations. However, governors did not rate these items as the most important factors to be considered when choosing candidates.

SELECTION PROCEDURES

After nominations have been forwarded to the minister, final selection procedures are initiated. During this phase of the process, one individual is chosen for each board vacancy from the pool of official nominees submitted from a variety of sources. Once again, the lack of prescribed proceedings has resulted in the evolution of unofficial procedures to guide the selection process. The perceptions of public officials were described in Chapter 4 while in Chapter 6 the perceptions of selected board members in their first term of office were provided. The following section presents a composite description of these perceptions.

The Actors and the Process

Initially, as depicted in Figure 7, the candidate documentation is forwarded to the department official who has been given the responsibility for coordination of selection procedures by the minister. This individual reports directly to the minister's office rather than going through the "regular channels" of communication within the department. One page summaries of each candidate are prepared based upon the information provided in resumes, covering letters and attached memos. These summaries and the original documentation are then returned to the minister's office.

Next, the minister and his personal staff conduct background checks of each candidate to verify material in the resumes and to further ascertain credentials for boardsmanship. Discussions with referees are used to narrow down the list of nominees. The minister consults MLAs and keeps them informed of proceedings. Board chairmen are also very influential and can play prominent roles in the process. Rarely are people appointed to boards without the consent of the chairmen. Occasionally, the premier becomes involved in appointments and his choices take

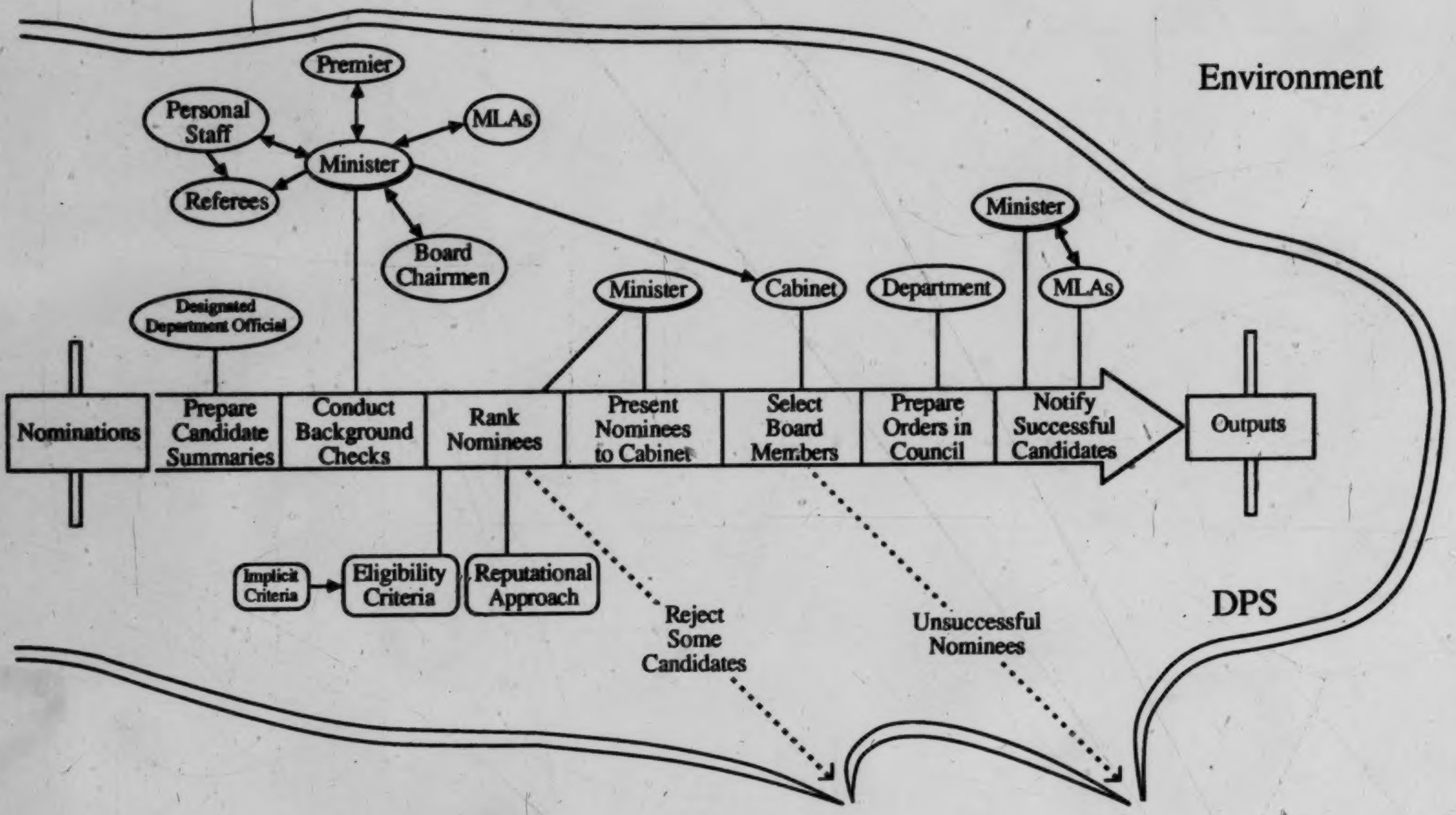
Environment
Premier
Personal Staff
MLAs
Minister
Referees
Board Chairmen
Minister
Designated Department Official
Minister
Cabinet
Department
MLAs
Nominations
Prepare Candidate Summaries
Conduct Background Checks
Rank Nominees
Present Nominees to Cabinet
Select Board Members
Prepare Orders in Council
Notify Successful Candidates
Outputs
Implicit Criteria
Eligibility Criteria
Reputational Approach
Reject Some Candidates
Unsuccessful Nominees
DPS

Figure 7 Selection Procedures

priority.

All discussions are treated in strict confidence and little is committed to paper. College presidents usually have very little influence over the appointment of new members. The style of the minister determines to a large degree who is consulted and, in general, the process is held very close to government.

When the minister has completed the background queries, he then ranks the nominees for each board in order of priority, using the information supplied by nominators and collected during the background checks. The criteria used to make the decisions are described in the following section. Once the ranking has been completed, the next step in the process is to present the ministerial recommendations to cabinet.

Since the Department of Advanced Education was formed in 1971, there have been five ministers assigned to the portfolio. An analysis of the interview data revealed that there have been essentially three different ministerial approaches for presenting the nominees to cabinet:

1. All candidates from all sources are listed in order of priority. The entire list is given to each cabinet minister. Cabinet, usually upon the recommendation of local MLAs, selects an individual for each vacancy. Local MLAs not in cabinet discuss nominees directly with the minister before cabinet meets. The minister reflects the views of MLAs during cabinet proceedings.

2. A short prioritized list of nominees composed of three to five names is presented to cabinet. The remainder of the candidates are rejected by the minister. Final selections are made by cabinet, usually upon the recommendation of local MLAs. The minister reflects the views of MLAs not in cabinet.

3. The minister brings forth one name for each vacancy and asks if cabinet has any concerns regarding his recommendations. The remainder of the nominees are rejected by the minister. This approach appears to be the current method of presentation.

Cabinet spends little time discussing board appointments as they are not considered to be a priority. Since the minister has consulted the premier and the appropriate MLAs with respect to his recommendations prior to the meeting, there is rarely any discussion. MLAs do not show much concern for or question nominees from other constituencies. While formal selection and approval of governors occurs in cabinet, the minister actually makes the final decisions based upon the recommendations of local MLAs and board chairmen.

Once the appointments have been formally approved in cabinet, the minister's office asks the Legislative Services branch of the Department of Advanced Education to prepare the Orders in Council (Appendix G). Successful candidates are initially informally notified of their appointment by either the minister or their local MLA by telephone or in person. Formal documentation is sent to each new governor specifying the board they have been appointed to and the term of office (Appendix H).

Criteria

As shown in Table 24, although nomination and selection criteria are similar, there are some differences. During the nomination phase, criteria focused primarily upon general eligibility factors such as competence and demonstrated ability. In the final selection phase attention turns to more specific items and the needs of individual institutions. According to public officials and board members, the composition of governing boards is not coincidental, it is planned.

Table 24 summarizes the criteria in order of priority as described by public officials. As shown in the table, the pool of nominees is first reduced by the minister according to political affiliation. Those displaying a philosophy in tune with government continue through the selection process. In other words, candidates must first be known to either the minister or the local MLA to qualify for further consideration. The remainder of the candidates are rejected by the minister. However, in some cases, upon recommendation of the local MLA, there is a deliberate effort to appoint one individual affiliated with a different political party.

TABLE 24
A COMPARISON OF NOMINATION AND SELECTION ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Nomination Criteria	Selection Criteria
Competence	Political affiliation
Demonstrated abilities	Contribution to occupational balance
- business expertise	Special institutional needs
- community involvement	Demonstrated abilities
	- business expertise
	- community involvement
	Personal characteristics

Nevertheless, results from the survey questionnaire administered to board members regarding the importance of board member characteristics (Table 11) revealed that the majority of college governors believed political affiliation to be an unimportant characteristic and only one person felt it had been used in their personal selection (Table 12). Yet, most had been involved in party politics in some way (Table 5). In addition, while almost all board members in their first term of office had been involved in party politics, only about half believed this participation to have been a reason for their selection. Thus, there appears to be a discrepancy between the criterion related to political affiliation applied by government and that which board members rated as important and believed was used in their personal selection. A possible reason for this discrepancy could relate to the idea that board members did not want their selections to be considered as patronage appointments.

The contribution nominees make to board balance is the second major criterion addressed by the minister according to public officials. Boards are considered to be autonomous governing bodies and as such, require diverse expertise to fulfill their responsibilities. Although there was a concerted effort by the minister to balance boards with respect to occupational backgrounds and expertise, presently there is an emphasis on business credentials which is attributed to a large degree to the then premier's belief in a corporate style of management. In general, each board is composed of a financial expert or accountant, a lawyer, an educational administrator, an additional professional such as an engineer, a community affairs activist and two business people with at least one from private business. Both genders are represented and where appropriate, regional representation is included. Special needs are addressed as well. An institution may be going through a developmental stage that requires, for example, a specific kind of expertise. The minister attempts to accommodate such needs.

All board members in their first term of office acknowledged the importance of balancing boards in terms of occupational backgrounds and expertise (Table 21). The emphasis government has placed on business credentials was also substantiated as almost two-thirds of the board members surveyed were involved in business as determined by management, sales and professional occupations (Table 3). Most of these governors not only supported the importance of business knowledge (Table 11), but over half believed it had been applied in their personal selection (Table 12).

Once occupational balance and special needs are taken into account by the minister, public officials believed the focus shifts to more general criteria where a reputational approach is used to further reduce the number of candidates. As with nominations, demonstrated ability or success in business and community affairs are major factors. Previous board experience is an asset. Personal characteristics including the ability to form independent opinions and deal with interest group pressure, openness and frankness in dealing with the president and other board members, as well as dedication to the community are also desired by government. In addition, members are drawn from a hundred mile radius around each college to improve accessibility to the institution and communication within the community.

As displayed in Table 11, most of the questionnaire respondents rated items related to demonstrated capabilities in business and community affairs as important board member characteristics. The majority also felt these credentials were responsible for their personal selections. Similarly, all of the board members interviewed considered demonstrated capabilities to be one of the most important characteristics leading to their selection (Table 18). The majority also identified previous board experience as a reason for personal selection. In addition, over half of these respondents (Table 21) cited the ability to think independently, interpersonal skills and open-mindedness as important characteristics for boardsmanship, thus lending support to the personal criteria considered desirable by government.

There were some discrepancies between the data provided by public officials and those given by board members as well. On the questionnaire governors rated interest in higher education, vision to move ahead with new ideas and time to devote to board activity as the three most desirable selection characteristics. The majority also thought these criteria were used in their personal selection. Similarly, all of the board members interviewed cited time as an important factor and some mentioned vision. Alternatively, few believed these items were responsible for their personal selection. Likewise, few public officials cited these three characteristics as those used by government.

Thus, it appears as if the perceptions of interviewed board members in their first term of office were more closely aligned with those of officials in regard to the criteria used to select college governors than were the perceptions provided by surveyed members. Since the individuals surveyed included governors in their first and second terms of office, a possible explanation for these discrepancies could be that longer standing board members' perceptions may have lost some precision over time. Alternatively, the form of data collection may have had an affect on the responses provided. Board members surveyed chose responses from a given list whereas the interviewed respondents were not provided with alternative answers to the questions posed. Hence, the survey instrument may have presented alternatives that board members would not have identified on their own.

As has been illustrated, the DPS includes a variety of political relationships through which the actors are linked to one another and through which the objectives of the system -- the selection of public board members -- are pursued. While the linkages between actors can be tight or loose, they are drawn together because they participate in a common process. In order to meet the objectives of the DPS, these actors employ a variety of eligibility criteria to first nominate candidates and then to select from among these nominees the successful college governors designated as the outputs of the system.

THE OUTPUTS

The outputs of the DPS refer to the individuals appointed as community college public board members. Data collected from the survey questionnaire were used to develop a profile depicting the current status of board membership in Alberta. Chapter 5 presented a detailed account of the findings. As described in Chapter 3, the opinions of the outputs and those responsible for their selection, namely public officials, form a feedback loop which serves to provide decision makers with information related to the success of the outputs. The following section describes the background profile of the outputs and presents, in a comprehensive form, the opinions of the three groups of respondents which formed the feedback loop.

Background Profile

Board members are predominantly middle-aged males who are long-time residents of the province and reside in the city in which the head office of the college is located. They are well-educated, financially successful professionals in their first term of office. Ideologically, they view themselves as conservative and are members of the political party in office provincially. They have not previously served on school district or other postsecondary governing boards but are active members of boards in non-educational sectors of the community. In general, they were not seeking board positions, were nominated by MLAs and disagreed with the use of local, provincial and government department nomination committees. They were satisfied with current selection procedures and rejected elections and school trustee representation as alternative forms of selection. Characteristics deemed important for boardsmanship and those identified as leading to personal selections encompassed a wide range of factors related to occupational background and personal qualities including interest in higher education, vision to move ahead with new ideas, involvement in community and/or business affairs, time to devote to board activity, business knowledge and stature in the community and /or vocation.

The Feedback Loop

The outputs of the DPS leave the system and enter the environment as community college public board members. Due to their affiliations with the political party in office, they are considered extensions of the DPS that appointed them. According to Easton (1966:9),

> these outputs leave the system to act upon society as a whole, with consequences that may make themselves felt subsequently through the generation of additional wants that seek entry into the system. This forms a closed-loop process, characterized as "feedback."

Through such feedback, Easton (1966:19) continued, "the authorities can determine the extent to which their outputs are alleviating stress and increasing support." To maintain a viable level of support for the system, the outputs need only satisfy part of the public -- the politically relevant or influential ones -- part of the time. The impact of the feedback loop depends on whether the authorities are able and willing to react to the information provided by the outputs they produced. "It is through their reactions to the continuous flow of information and actions through a system and its environment," Easton (1966:22) concluded, "that a system seeks to control, regulate, modify, or fundamentally transform itself and its environment." Since the authorities are elected as representatives of those providing support for the system, they, too, interact with the environment outside the DPS and form part of the feedback loop. In the end, a successful system must have some means of informing the authorities or actors in the process about the results of their actions. The feedback loop performs this function.

In this case, as depicted in Figure 8, the feedback loop is composed of three parts. The first segment includes the authorities and the outputs. Through fulfilling their responsibilities as college governors and participating in community and/or business affairs, the outputs interact with the environment and provide the authorities with information based on these interactions.

The second part of the loop involves the outputs and those supplying support to the DPS, namely, the electorate. As members of the community, the outputs interact with the electorate who, in turn, communicate their support for the outputs to the

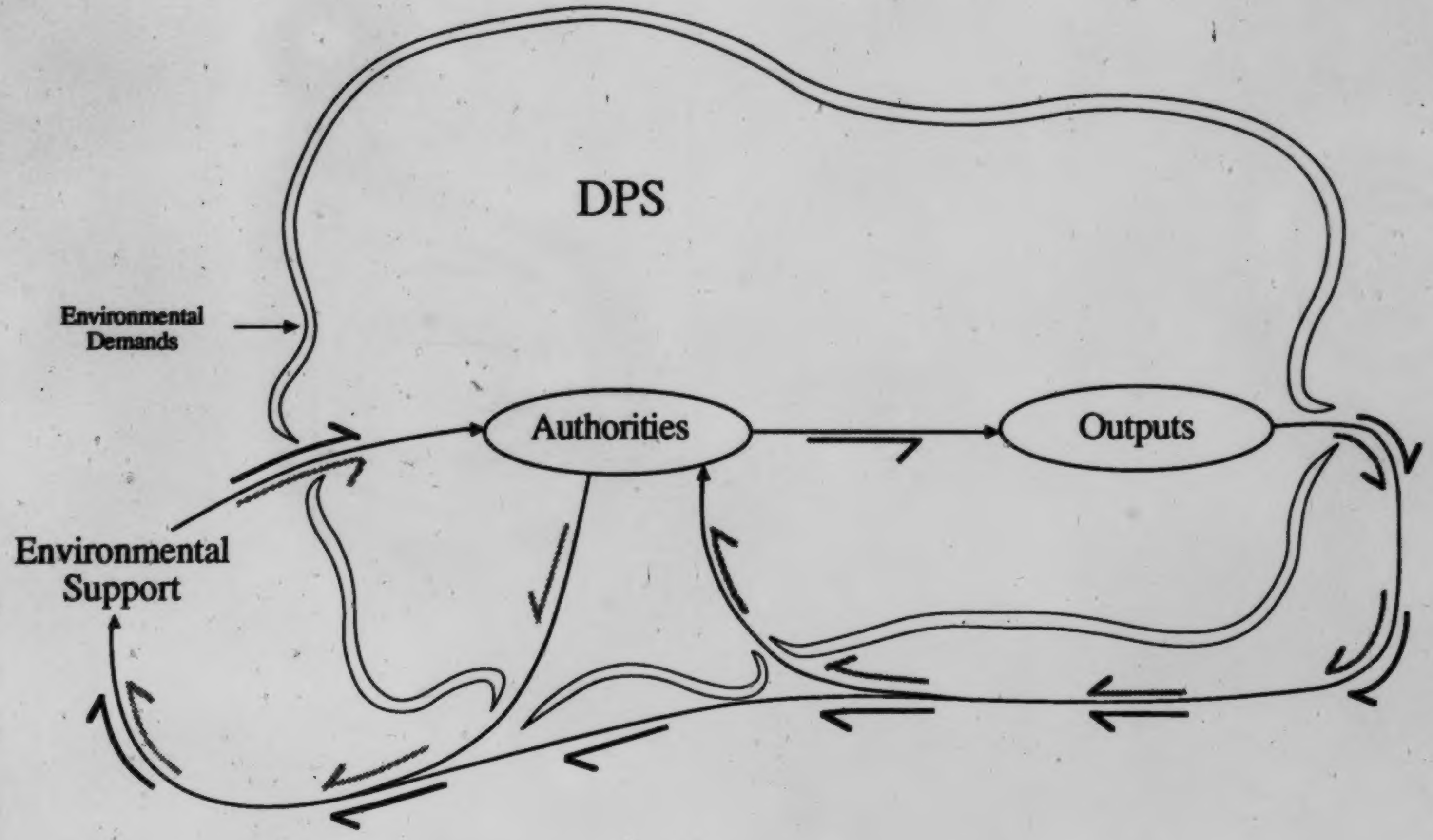
DPS
Environmental Demands
Authorities
Outputs
Environmental Support

Figure 8 The Three Parts of the DPS Feedback Loop

authorities. Through the information they receive from members of the electorate in terms of political support and other forms of communication, including verbal and written dialogue, the authorities are able to make judgments about the selection process.

The third part of the loop includes the authorities and those supplying support to the DPS. Since many of the authorities within the DPS, including the premier, minister and MLAs, are elected representatives of the general public, they also interact with the electorate which provides the political support for the DPS to function. Through these interactions the authorities receive additional information about the outputs from which they are able to further judge the effectiveness of their decisions.

The feedback loop may appear to be a relatively simple system, but the interactions among and between the components of the diagram are complex and in a constant state of flux. As the environmental conditions around the DPS change, the environmental demands and support are affected accordingly. Since the selection process is not regulated, the interactions of the authorities within the system fluctuate as some actors are excluded from the process and others are included usually upon the minister's prerogative. In addition, if the electorate chooses to shift its support to another political party, this will not only alter the membership of the authorities within the system, but could result in major modifications to selection procedures. The interactions of both the outputs and the authorities with the environment do not remain static, but shift over time in an attempt to adapt to the stress created by changing environmental conditions.

All of these continuing changes have an impact upon the dynamic nature of the process used to select community college public board members. The feedback loop serves to keep authorities informed about the results of their actions. The impact of the feedback loop is dependent upon the ability and desire of the authorities to make adjustments to nomination and selection procedures and the accompanying criteria based upon the information they receive through a combination of their interactions with the environment and their outputs, as well as, with the interaction of the outputs with the environment.

The information the authorities and outputs obtain result in the formation of perceptions. As described in Chapter 3, perceptions are formed in a three-stage process. Individuals screen out information deemed irrelevant to the situtation at hand and select that which they consider to be applicable. Based on past experiences, values, beliefs and attitudes the situation is then given meaning or interpreted. Perceptions are formed when individuals draw conclusions regarding given situations. Based upon their interactions with the environment and the actors in the DPS, the three groups of respondents in this study formed perceptions about the selection process. As a result of these perceptions, they formed opinions about nomination and selection procedures.

Opinions About Nomination Procedures

The following section provides a comprehensive overview of these opinions as they relate to specific aspects of nomination procedures.

Nomination committees. In the literature nomination committees have often been cited as a recommended means of identifying candidates for office. In the survey questionnaire described in Chapter 5, board members were requested to indicate their extent of agreement with statements regarding the composition of nomination committees (Table 8). College governors were strongly opposed to provincial and government department committees and split almost evenly on their opinions of local nomination committees with several undecided. Thus, in general, board members do not agree with the use of committees, regardless of composition, to submit nominations for board appointments to the minister.

Advantages and disadvantages. The lack of prescribed nomination procedures were perceived by both public officials and board members to be a major strength of the current process as it provided the opportunity for nominations to be made from different segments of the community. However, this lack of structure was also perceived by the two cohorts to hold the potential for abuse. Since the minister did not have to appoint governors from those nominated, the possibility existed for appointments to be used exclusively for patronage purposes.

Suggested improvements. Public officials and board members in their first term of office agreed on suggested improvements for nomination procedures. More public participation in the process was recommended. Nominations were seen to be closely associated with local MLA contact. As a result, potentially strong board members could be overlooked if they were not actively involved in party politics. Advertisements were thought to be a means of soliciting more public participation. In this way, the public would become more aware of vacancies and could help to identify people who are interested in the college and are willing to serve on the board, but who may otherwise not have the opportunity to express their interest.

In addition, both groups felt boards should be more involved in nomination proceedings. Due to their proximity to the institutions and the responsibilities they assumed as governors, board members could make potentially valuable contributions to the process. While some college boards actively participated in the process, others experienced only limited involvement. The level of involvement depended upon the extent to which local MLAs and board chairmen chose to include public members. Thus, public officials and college governors believed procedures should be structured to some extent and offered the following suggestions: (1) The minister should formally request each board to submit a description of the skills, expertise and other desired characteristics required to meet the needs of their respective colleges at a particular time. It should be accompanied by a list of potential candidates identified by the board as possessing the desired credentials. (2) In a similar fashion, candidates nominated from other sources should also be screened by the present board to see if they possess the needed expertise. Recommendations based on these assessments should be forwarded to the minister as well. (3) There should be more consultation with college presidents during nomination proceedings.

In addition, concern was expressed by board members in relation to the lack of information available to potential candidates. Before nominations are submitted to the minister, potential candidates should be given detailed information regarding the responsibilities associated with board membership. Based on this information, they could then make their decision as to whether to allow their nominations to stand. Many respondents believed that a lack of information was the leading factor in the selection of governors who were unable to fulfill their responsibilities.

Opinions About Selection Procedures

The following section provides a comprehensive overview of the opinions of the three groups of respondents as they relate to specific aspects of selection procedures.

Process descriptors. The terms used by public officials to describe the overall selection process reflected the lack of prescribed legislation and documented procedures and the subsequent latitude the minister has with respect to selection proceedings. As depicted in Figures 6 and 7, the minister is the principal actor throughout much of the process. Since most actions are guided by "implicit" procedures, the vast majority of officials agreed, that, in many respects the process was informal, unstructured and open to the minister's discretion.

While board members expressed agreement with the use of these descriptors of the process, some chose to temper the terms. "Unstructured" was substituted with "lightly structured" in order to denote some degree of regularity to the process. Similarly, "open" was qualified with "relatively open" as the minister was perceived to have some restrictions placed upon his freedom simply due to his association with the party in office. There was strong agreement with the use of the descriptor "informal."

Advantages. The informality, lack of structure and openness associated with the process were perceived by both public officials and board members to comprise the major strength of the current selection process. The responses given by the two groups were very similar in nature. Flexibility and openness were cited as the major advantages as they provided the freedom for the minister to make decisions on diverse appointments and thus, afforded the opportunity to build more balanced boards based upon the needs of individual colleges. In this way, the process could be adapted to accommodate changes in the environment, as well as within the system itself.

The lack of prescribed criteria added to the flexibility and openness of the process. The use of what was termed "artificial criteria" was thought to place limits on the process as people who did not fit into predesignated slots would be excluded. A rigid system, in terms of "tight" procedures and criteria, was viewed by both groups as detrimental to meeting the needs of diverse communities in changing times.

Disadvantages. On the other hand, this degree of freedom was not without its perceived disadvantages. The most common concern expressed by the two cohorts focused upon the potential for abuse. The lack of structure provided the opportunity for board appointments to be used exclusively for patronage purposes. Since there are no rules, regulations or even guidelines, the commitment and integrity of the minister and MLAs were seen by respondents to play a prominent role in selection proceedings.

Nevertheless, both public officials and board members firmly believed the advantages of the current method of selection clearly outweighed the disadvantages. The flexible nature of the process was seen to allow the actors to accommodate the needs of colleges as they adapt to a changing environment.

Suggested improvements. Although public officials and board members expressed mainly favourable opinions in relation to current selection procedures, they also suggested improvements. In order to minimize the potential for abuse, some degree of structure was recommended to guide the proceedings. In order to avoid delays in filling board vacancies, both groups felt procedures should be incorporated to ensure boards have full membership at all times. Some public officials believed boards should be more involved in supplying the criteria for selection. Others felt board chairmen and college presidents should be consulted throughout all phases of the process including final selections, rather than allowing the minister the freedom to include "those he wants when he wants." Although board members also expressed a strong desire to be more formally involved in selection procedures, especially in regard to identifying the needs of the college and community and in supplying criteria, most believed the minister should be ultimately responsible for the appointments and did not wish to participate in final selections.

Interestingly, both groups of respondents indicated the importance of some sort of feedback cycle to determine the sucess of current selection procedures and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of boards. In other words, some means of assessing the present performance of board members was recommended before new members were appointed. In this way, new appointments could be used to fill in the perceived gaps in skills and expertise. Neither group was suggesting the incorporation of "tight" rules or regulations, nor a formal system of evaluation, but rather some sort of broad guidelines to assist in the development of a more effective means of identifying the best possible people to serve on community college boards.

The issue of community representation. Board members who were interviewed considered the issue of community representation almost exclusively in terms of occupational diversity and believed government did likewise. While they felt there was a deliberate attempt by government to diversify and avoid duplication of backgrounds of college governors, the inclusion of a mixture of socio-economic levels and political philosophies was thought to be given little consideration with respect to most boards in the province.

Public officials substantiated this perspective. They, too, believed there was a concerted effort by the minister to balance boards with respect to occupational backgrounds and where appropriate to include regional representation. But, they also felt that there was little effort to make boards representative of the general public in terms of socio-economic level and political philosophies, although there was a deliberate attempt by some MLAs to recommend the appointment of one individual affiliated with a different political party to governing boards in their constituencies. As a result of their research in relation to the recruitment of political elites, Almond and Powell (1978:102) found that "the operation of both motivation and selection virtually ensures that leaders will not be randomly representative of the general society."

Importance of information related to their selection process. Although board members in their first term of office felt they could obtain as much information about the selection process as they desired through their MLAs, most thought such information was unimportant. They were more concerned about people fulfilling the responsibilities of the job once appointed. Knowledge of the process was only seen to be of value as a means of positive reinforcement from government.

Satisfaction with the process. In general, all three groups of respondents were satisfied with the current selection process. Nearly half of the questionnaire respondents rejected a combination of appointed and elected members and the majority disagreed with school trustee representation. Elections proved to be the most unpopular alternative to the current process as most opposed this method of selection. Similarly, most public officials and selected board members in their first term of office rejected the elective mode.

Advantages of elections. Nevertheless, some advantages to the elective process were cited. Board members concerned with the lack of access to public board positions suggested that elections may be one avenue for individuals who do not have the right contacts established to seek board positions. Both public officials and governors believed elections reflected the democratic process by allowing the general populace to select their college board members and, as a result, might generate publicity for the colleges.

Disadvantages of elections. Conversely, several disadvantages were identified. Governors in their first term of office believed elections to be expensive undertakings in terms of time and money and felt many capable individuals would do the job if approached, but would not consider running campaigns. Elections were considered to be popularity contests with little regard for the capabilities of the candidates or the needs of the institution.

As provincially supported institutions, colleges do not serve specific geographic regions. Hence, the identification of boundaries was seen to be a major obstacle confronting elective procedures. More importantly, both groups contended, board composition would be left entirely up to chance. There would be no means of balancing membership, controlling unnecessary duplication of backgrounds or matching institutional needs with the talents and expertise of candidates. The continuity of board membership would be disrupted and control over the rotation of appointments would be lost. Elected individuals were perceived to be directly responsible to the electorate and, as a consequence, would be more susceptible to interest group pressure than were appointed members.

Thus, in general, public officials and board members shared many similar opinions with respect to most aspects of the selection process.

SUMMARY

This chapter has presented a comprehensive overview of the process used to select Alberta community college public board members. The environment, nomination procedures, selection procedures and outputs were discussed in accordance with the DPS model. This model also provided the basis for the data analysis which was presented in narrative and diagrammatic form, along with the descriptive data. To provide a summary of the process, a composite model (Figure 9) was prepared and is presented in Appendix I. This diagrammatic representation of the DPS attempts to show the integration of the major components of the system.

The final chapter outlines the research design and conceptual framework, summarizes the major findings of the study, presents conclusions about the the selection process indicating how they confirm, contradict or go beyond what was in the literature, suggests a number of implications for practice and offers suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The part boards of governors play in institutional governance has been deemed integral to the operation of community colleges by both government and scholars. Herron (1969:70) described governing boards as occupying "the strategic command posts" in higher education. Ingram (1980b:24) believed lay governing boards to be higher education's best hope of coping successfully with the future challenges facing colleges. The Carnegie Commission (1973:79) concluded that the quality of governance depended "in the end, and above all else," on the individuals selected to participate in it. Yet, a review of the literature revealed that limited research has been done in relation to governing boards. In particular, the area of board member selection has received little attention. This study was designed to help fill this notable gap in higher education research by documenting and analyzing the process used to select college board members in one Canadian province.

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the findings of this study, formulate some general conclusions with respect to the selection process and discuss the implications of the study for practice and further research.

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This section presents the purpose of the study, outlines the research design and conceptual framework and summarizes the major findings of the study.

Purpose and Statement of the Problem

According to the Colleges Act (1985), community college public board members in Alberta are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor by an Order in Council. Other than that, very little is known about the selection process. The purpose of this study was to examine the process used to select Alberta community college public board members. While investigating the main problem, answers to the following specific questions were sought:

Nomination Procedures

1. What is the process by which public board members are nominated for board membership?
    - (a) How are board vacancies made known to the public?
    - (b) Where do nominations originate?
    - (c) What procedures are followed in the nomination process?
    - (d) What criteria are used to nominate candidates?

Selection Procedures

2. What is the process by which public board members are selected for board membership?
    - (a) What procedures are followed in the selection process?
    - (b) What criteria are used in the selection process?
    - (c) Who is involved in the selection process?
    - (d) What is the role of cabinet in the selection process?
    - (e) Are decision makers required to explain the reasons for their selections? If so, to whom, in what format and to what degree?

Board Member Perceptions

3. How do community college public board members view their selection?
    - (a) Who do they believe nominated them for board membership?
    - (b) What nomination procedures do they believe were followed?
    - (c) What selection procedures do they believe were used?
    - (d) What individuals do they believe were involved in their selection?
    - (e) What criteria do they believe led to their selection?

Board Member Background Profile

4. What is the demographic profile of current community college public board members in the province of Alberta?
    - (a) What community activities were they engaged in prior to their appointment to the board?
    - (b) What was the nature of their involvement in party politics?
    - (c) What characteristics do they feel are important when selecting governing board members?

Opinions About the Selection Process

5. What opinions do respondents hold with respect to selected aspects of the current selection process?
    - (a) What terms do they believe describe the current selection process?
    - (b) What are the advantages of the current selection process?
    - (c) What are the disadvantages of the current selection process?
    - (d) How could the current selection process be improved?
    - (e) Do they believe there is an attempt to balance boards with respect to age, sex and occupational backgrounds?

(f) Do they believe boards to be representative of the community the college serves?

(g) Are they satisfied with the current selection process?

(h) What do they believe will happen to the current selection process in the next ten years?

Collection of Data

A four-step data collection process was employed. First, a survey questionnaire was given to the total population of community college public board members in Alberta in order to gather personal and professional background characteristics and obtain their opinions in relation to certain aspects of their selection (Appendix A). The questionnaire was part of a larger research project under the direction of Konrad (1986) which was designed to examine the shifting role of governing boards.

Secondly, semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals currently or at one time directly involved in the selection of public board members (Appendix B). The purpose of these interviews was to determine the sequential pattern of interaction whereby individuals were appointed to college governing boards. The participants included current and former elected and appointed government officials, college presidents and board chairmen. A "reputational" approach was used to identify important people in the area. This portion of the data collection phase was terminated when two conditions were met: (1) new data were no longer being generated and; (2) additional respondents were no longer being recommended. In total, twenty-eight individuals were interviewed, twenty-six by means of personal interviews and two by telephone.

Following preliminary analysis of the survey data and the officials' interview data semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected Alberta community college public board members in their first term of office (Appendix C). The purpose of these interviews was to gather data not easily accessible through the questionnaire format and in more detail than that elicited by the survey instrument in relation to background experiences and personal perceptions of their selection. From the four boards selected for this portion of the research, fourteen members were in their first term of office. Personal interviews were used in thirteen of the cases and a telephone interview was employed in the remaining case.

The fourth phase of the data collection process was an ongoing part of the research that involved the acquisition of documents related to the selection of community college public board members in Alberta. The purpose of the documents was to provide a basic understanding of the arrangements made by government in relation to the selection process. The Legislature Library files, minister's office, Legislative Services branch of the Department of Advanced Education and public board members were the major sources of information.

Analysis of Data

The majority of the questionnaire data were descriptive in nature and were presented in terms of frequency counts, mean responses and percentages of the total population. However, where applicable, in order to compare the perceptions of board members in relation to selected factors, a series of t-tests were performed on the pertinent item means.

Two distinct sets of interview data were collected in this study: (1) data gathered from public officials; and (2) board member data. Both were analyzed separately according to similar classification schemes composed of two major categories: (1) information related to the selection process; and (2) opinions about the selection process (Appendix D). A separate reliability check was performed on each set of transcripts to verify the reliability of the classification schemes. Each set of coded transcripts was searched to identify regularities and patterns as well as discern differences.

Conceptual Framework

By incorporating the elements from three distinct conceptual schemes, a framework termed a dynamic political system or DPS was designed to identify the major components of the study and to guide the research. The purpose of the DPS was to select community college public board members. The four major components of this study were the environment surrounding the DPS, nomination and selection procedures which took place within the DPS and the products of the DPS termed outputs. This study focused primarily upon the last three components. To set the context for the study, the environment was described in terms of the professional literature. With respect to the five research questions stated earlier in the chapter, the first three were designed to determine nomination and selection procedures, the fourth to determine the kind of outputs the DPS produced and the final question served to provide feedback information for the DPS.

While the DPS maintained its own boundaries, it was surrounded by and interacted with other social systems in the surrounding environment. As a result, the DPS was subject to influences or inputs from these other systems termed environmental demands and environment support. To differentiate the DPS from its environment, an artificial boundary or gateway was established as the site at which interactions between the DPS and the environment occurred. The boundary was not static, but shifted over time in an attempt to react to changing environmental demands and support as the system evolved.

Inside the DPS there existed a number of political relationships through which actors or authorities were linked to one another as they participated in a common structure and set of procedures. Selection resulted from a process incorporating an initial nomination phase and final selection component which explained the "how" of recruitment by describing the sequential pattern of interaction whereby individuals were appointed to community college governing boards. Certain eligibility criteria were first used to determine the nominees, then additional criteria were employed to make final selections from among the candidates. Eligibility for public board membership was directly related to stature in the political arena.

The outputs of the DPS referred to the individuals appointed as community college public board members. Due to their affiliations with the political party in office, they were considered extensions of the DPS that appointed them. The effect they had upon the environment influenced the support given to the system and formed a feedback loop. The impact of the feedback loop depended on whether the authorities were able and willing to make adjustments to nomination and selection procedures and the accompanying criteria based upon the information they received through a combination of their interactions with the environment and their outputs, as well as, with the interaction of the outputs with the environment.

To schematically represent the DPS model and illustrate the dynamic nature of the process used to select Alberta community college public board members, a biological analogy was developed. A microorganism known as the amoeba, which contains a selectively permeable membrane and functions by means of chemical processes or interactions carried out within its fluid system, was used as the basis for this comparison.

In the end, the modified conceptual framework served as a map and simply showed the preliminary course of action by identifying the major components of the study. It was not meant to show a complete picture of the study. The intent of the research was to examine each component of the conceptual model in detail. As a mode of conceptualization, the purpose of the DPS model was to illustrate the selection process as a dynamic system and to depict the exchanges the system has with its environment and, more importantly, to determine the manner in which the members of the system respond to these interactions, as well as, those within the system in order to develop procedures to guide the selection of college governors.

FINDINGS

The research questions of the study are restated and the findings related to each question are summarized in this section.

1. What is the process by which public board members are nominated for board membership?

The lack of prescribed legislation or documentation, official or unofficial, has given the minister considerable latitude with respect to nomination procedures and has resulted in the development of implicit procedures and criteria. When board member terms near expiration, department officials prepare a list outlining the number, type and location of openings. The minister sends memos to MLAs in the immediate vicinity and surrounding region of the colleges requesting names and resumes of candidates outlining occupation, previous elected or appointed positions and public or community service.

Nomination criteria focus primarily upon eligibility factors such as competence, demonstrated ability in business affairs, political and community activities and interest and dedication to public service. In order to discern the degree to which these characteristics are prevalant in potential candidates, a "reputational approach" is used.

Potential candidates are identified by a variety of people. Either MLAs approach their respective board chairmen to discuss the kinds of people that are required by boards to meet the needs of their colleges or the minister personally contacts the chairmen to request nominees. In turn, board chairmen discuss potential candidates with their boards. Often board members exchange views among themselves. The premier, minister, MLAs and board chairmen also approach trusted business and/or political associates in their constituencies to suggest prospective members and act as informal referees. In some colleges, the president is intimately involved in garnering nominees. Some people nominate themselves. Opposition MLAs, especially if the college resides in their constituency, participate as well.

Discussions regarding potential nominees are conducted informally and are not committed to paper. Candidates are usually contacted by those people who will eventually officially nominate them for office to inquire if they are interested in the position. A positive response by the candidate then leads to a request by the nominator for a resume. This document, together with the formal nomination letter, is either submitted directly to the minister by the nominator or via the local MLA.

2. What is the process by which public board members are selected for board membership?

After nominations have been forwarded to the minister, final selection procedures are initiated. During this phase of the process, one individual is chosen for each board vacancy from the pool of official nominees submitted from a variety of sources. Once again, the lack of prescribed proceedings has resulted in the evolution of unofficial procedures to guide the selection process.

Initially, one page summaries are prepared for each candidate by the department official who has been given the responsibility for coordination of selection procedures by the minister. The minister and his personal staff then conduct background checks of candidates to verify material in the resumes and to further ascertain their credentials for boardsmanship. Discussions with the premier, referees, MLAs and board charimen are used to narrow down the list of nominees. All discussions are treated in strict confidence and little is committed to paper. The style of the minister determines to a large degree who is consulted and, in general, the process is held very close to government. Based upon information received from nominators and collected during backgroumd checks the minister ranks the nominees for each board.

Implicit criteria are used by the minister to guide final selections. The pool of nominees is first reduced according to political affiliation. The contribution nominees make to board balance is addressed in terms of occupational background and expertise. Both genders are represented, and where appropriate regional representation is included. The minister tries to accommodate special needs of institutions as well.

Then, the focus shifts to more general criteria where a reputational approach is used to further reduce the number of candidates. As with nominations, demonstrated ability or success in business, political and community affairs are major factors. Previous board experience is an asset. Personal characteristics including the ability to form independent opinions, deal with interest group pressure and be open and frank in dealing with the president and other board members are also desired by government.

Three different ministerial approaches have been used to present nominees to cabinet including providing a prioritized list of all nominees, presenting three to five nominees, or recommending one nominee for each vacancy. Prior to cabinet meetings the minister consults with the premier and appropriate MLAs with respect to his recommendations. There is rarely any discussion with respect to board appointments in cabinet. The minister's recommendations are simply approved.

Following formal cabinet approval, the minister's office asks the Legislative Services branch of the Department of Advanced Education to prepare the Orders in Council. Successful candidates are initially informally notified of their appointment by either the minister or their local MLA by telephone or in person. Formal documentation follows specifying the board they have been appointed to and the term of office.

3. How do community college public board members view their selection?

Most board members possessed considerable knowledge about nomination and selection procedures. In varying degrees of specificity, the process was described by the majority of appointees.

During nomination proceedings, informal contact was made via the nominator to discern the willingness of individuals to serve. A positive response led to a request for a resume depicting the nominee's occupation, community service background and previous board experience. This document, together with the formal nomination letter was submitted to either the minister or the local MLA by the nominator. MLAs and, to a lesser degree, board chairmen were identified as the major source of nominations.

Selection proceedings, respondents believed, were handled by the minister's office. The minister and his personal staff conducted background checks and evaluated each candidate with particular emphasis in the areas of community affairs and personal expertise. Board chairmen were closely involved in the identification of the kind of expertise needed by their colleges. The minister made an effort to avoid unnecessary duplication of skills and attempted to match nominee credentials with the needs of the institutions. MLA recommendations played a substantial role in final selections which were formally approved in cabinet.

Interestingly, there were discrepancies between board members surveyed and those interviewed in relation to personal selection criteria. Both groups cited involvement in community activities and business credentials as major criteria. Over half of the questionnaire respondents also chose interest in higher education, time to devote to board activity and vision to move ahead with new ideas as leading to their appointments. Over half of the board members surveyed identified previous board experience and involvement in party politics as additional criteria responsible for their selections.

4. What is the demographic profile of current community college public board members in the province of Alberta?

Board members are predominantly middle-aged males who are long-time residents of the province and reside in the city in which the head office of the college is located. They are well-educated, financially successful professionals in their first term of office. Ideologically, they view themselves as conservative and are members of the political party in office provincially. Most are involved in party politics either in an administrative capacity or as campaign workers. They have not previously served on school district or other postsecondary governing boards but they are active members of boards in non-educational sectors of the community. The majority are heavily involved in community activities as indicated by their participation in service clubs, sports clubs, fund raising groups, and civic advisory, business, professional, school and church organizations. Characteristics deemed important for boardsmanship encompassed a wide variety of factors related to background and personal qualities including contribution to board balance, interest in higher education, vision to move ahead with new ideas, time to devote to board activity, involvement in community affairs, business knowledge and stature in the community and/or vocation.

5. What opinions do respondents hold with respect to selected aspects of the current selection process?

The opinions offered by the three groups of respondents were very similar in nature. Due to the lack of prescribed legislation and documented procedures and the subsequent latitude the minister has with respect to the selection proceedings, the process was described as informal, unstructured and open to the minister's discretion. The major advantages of such procedures included the flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances and the freedom to make decisions on diverse appointments in order to build more balanced boards based upon the needs of individual colleges. Disadvantages focused upon the potential for abuse. The lack of structure provided the opportunity for board appointments to be used exclusively for patronage purposes. Since there are no rules, regulations or even guidelines, the commitment and integrity of the minister and MLAs were seen by respondents to play a prominent role in selection proceedings.

Suggestions for improvement included: (1) an increased public awareness regarding board vacancies, (2) more board member involvement in the identification of institutional needs and the supplying of selection criteria, (3) additional participation by board chairmen and college presidents throughout all phases of the process including final selections, (4) increased preparation of potential candidates, and (5) the incorporation of some sort of feedback cycle to determine the success of current selection procedures and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of boards.

Community representation was viewed almost exclusively in terms of occupational diversity. There was believed to be a deliberate attempt by government to balance boards with respect to occupational backgrounds and where appropriate to include regional representation, but the inclusion of a mixture of socio-economic levels and political philosophies was thought to be given little consideration with respect to most boards in the province.

In general, all three groups of respondents were satisfied with the current selection process. The use of local, provincial, and government department nomination committees and school trustee representation were rejected. In particular, strong opposition was expressed by all three cohorts with respect to the elective alternative. While elections were perceived to ameliorate candidate accessibility difficulties, the disadvantages, including expense, increased politicization, uncontrolled board membership, constituency and funding concerns, were thought to clearly outweigh the advantages.

While minor modifications will continue to be made to nomination and selection proceedings, unless there is a major political change or economic crisis, the current process was projected to remain relatively unchanged for the next decade. Alterations to selection criteria were predicted as colleges become more involved in fund raising activities and the need for some kind of vision to guide the college through changing environmental conditions receives increased attention.

Discussion of Findings

The following discussion relates the findings for each research question in this study to those of other studies on governing boards in postsecondary institutions.

Nomination and selection procedures. The first two research questions in this study sought to provide data to describe the nomination and selection procedures used for the appointment of community college public board members. In Alberta, the lack of prescribed legislation and documented procedures and criteria have resulted in the use of implicit proceedings and criteria to guide the selection process. Similarly, during his study of the process used to select trustees at private American colleges, Fistler (1982) found few guidelines or criteria in the institutional bylaws. The major form of selection was co-optation. Individual boards determined the specific criteria used in selection and the degree of representation they needed.

In relation to public American institutions, the National Commission on College and University Trustee selection (1980) uncovered comparable data. Little documentation existed to guide board selections. Appointments were found to be closely tied to local political traditions with political parties competing for the selection of members representing their political philosophies. Just as the minister of Advanced Education has considerable freedom during all phases of the selection process in Alberta, Paltridge et al. (1973) found that in relation to the selection of trustees of American public institutions, most board members were either appointed solely by the state governor or in conjunction with the state legislature.

The National Commission (1980) and the current study both found political affiliation to be the primary selection criterion. However, in Alberta, the minister also selects board members based upon additional criteria including contribution to board balance in terms of occupational and regional diversity, special needs of institutions and demonstrated capabilities. In the United States, political criteria were found to be given priority by the governor almost to the exclusion of qualitative criteria.

Board member perceptions of their selection process. The third research question in this study sought to garner board member perceptions of their selection process. Only one study was found to be directly related to the current research. Thus, it bears further consideration.

About ten years ago, a similar study was initiated by Konrad (1977b) at the University of Alberta to examine methods of board member selection and to ascertain how governors viewed the process. However, the pool of respondents included nineteen newly appointed and reappointed public board members, as well as, sixteen faculty and student members. As a result, the interview questions also discerned perspectives regarding institutional memberships. Bearing these differences in mind, comparisons have been drawn between the board member comments made in the 1972-74 study and those offered in the current research project in terms of background experiences and personal perceptions of the selection process.

While both groups of public board members shared many background experiences, there were some differences. Participation in a wide variety of volunteer community activities, ranging from service clubs to local advisory boards, was common to the vast majority of governors. However, those in the current study were more involved in party politics than those in the Konrad (1977) project. Only one present member (7.1%) indicated no political involvement compared to seven (36.8%) of the former public board members. This appears to show an increased government preference for persons displaying similar political philosophies. While the potential dangers of political patronage were readily identified by both cohorts, they still believed other factors, such as their community involvement, were ultimately responsible for their appointments.

Nomination procedures have changed. In the early 1970s, board vacancies were advertised in local newspapers throughout the province. Although the majority of both cohorts were aware of who had nominated them for office, MLA participation has increased substantially (from 36.8% to 64.3%) and board chairmen have replaced service club and other forms of citizen involvement.

Current board members are much more knowledgeable about the selection process than was previously evident. According to Konrad (1977:141) "Respondents knew neither the steps that had been followed nor the criteria that had been used. . . ." In this case, most were familiar with selection procedures and all were able to provide the criteria they believed led to their selection. Resumes are now required from candidates. Consistent with the Konrad (1977:142) study, "It appears that the government is centrally involved in the selection procedures. . . ." However, the procedures followed seem to be less of a mystery than was previously discerned. This could be due to the fact that an increased number of governors are now associated with the party in some way and, therefore, they may have a more direct link to government information sources.

While elections were considered the most obvious alternative to the appointive process, neither cohort favoured such a procedure. Expense, constituency and quality of candidates were common concerns. Although both groups cited the opportunity for the general public to choose their own board members as an advantage of elections, current governors tended to view the major advantage of elections as providing access to individuals who do not have the "right" contacts established within the present system.

The two cohorts offered a number of suggestions for improving the selection process. Both groups advocated the need for more board member involvement including assessing board needs, providing nominations and criteria and "screening" candidates. They also emphasized the need to maintain a continuity of public membership by filling board vacancies as they arise. Conversely, there appears to have been a shift in the kind of information desired by appointees. While respondents in the original study were mainly concerned with the provision of information related to appointment procedures and criteria, current board members emphasized the need for more public awareness and candidate information.

In conclusion, both studies revealed strong board member satisfaction with selection procedures, but current board members not only feel more knowledgeable about the selection process now than they did a decade ago, but they are also more concerned about public access to board positions and the lack of available information for potential candidates than were their predecessors.

Board member background profile.—The fourth research question sought to develop a background profile of current Alberta community college public board members. In general, board members represent a fairly uniform demographic profile. They are middle-aged, well-educated, financially successful, professional males who are long-time residents of the province and possess the same political philosophy as the party in office. These findings are consistent with those in other studies conducted in Canada and the United States. Although Konrad's (1977b) study included community colleges across Canada, his research produced comparable results. Similarly, in reference to American postsecondary governing boards, Hartnett (1969), Thompson (1979), National Commission on College and University Trustee Selection (1980), and Fistler (1982) substantiated these results. Interestingly, Thompson (1979) found that community college appointed boards were younger and had more women and minorities than their elected counterparts.

Opinions about the selection process. The fifth research question sought to discern opinions of the three groups of respondents with respect to selected aspects of the selection process. Due to the lack of prescribed legislation and documented procedures and the subsequent latitude the minister has with respect to the selection proceedings in Alberta, the process was described by both public officials and college governors as informal, unstructured and open to the minister's discretion. In a similar fashion, Fistler (1982) and the National Commission on College and University Trustee Selection (1980) found few guidelines or criteria to guide trustee selections in private and public institutions, respectively, resulting in what was termed informal, unsystematic procedures.

Respondents in both the current research and the National Commission (1980) were concerned with the potential for abuse afforded by such procedures. The lack of structure was seen to prevent talented people from being recognized for boardsmanship and to provide the opportunity for board appointments to be used exclusively for patronage purposes. The National Commission (1980) recommended the establishment of a state governor appointed nominating committee to assess board membership needs, and to search for and screen qualified candidates. Conversely, respondents in the current study rejected the use of local or provincial nomination committees and, instead, recommended more board member involvement in the identification of institutional needs, the identification of selection criteria, and screening of candidates, as well as, increased participation by board chairmen and college presidents throughout all phases of the process including final selections. Respondents in the Konrad (1977a) study also opposed nomination structures centred in government, favouring a decentralized appointment procedure. Similarly, as a result of his work in relation to Ontario community college boards, Pitman (1986) recommended that local boards actually select their own public members without government intervention. In contrast to these findings, Dennison and Harris (1984) found that board members in British Columbia supported school trustee and government representation on college boards. However, this form of representation has traditionally been the case in this province.

Respondents in the current research, Dennison and Harris (1984), the National Commission (1980), and Konrad (1977b) studies strongly favoured the appointive method over the elective mode citing expense, increased politicization and uncontrolled membership in terms of quality and expertise of candidates as disadvantages of elections. While constituency and funding problems were also identified in the current research, the National Commission (1980:19) believed "the most important disadvantage . . . [is] that it forces candidates to take stands on issues before they have been oriented to their responsibilities as trustees and to the often complex issues confronting their institutions."

In Alberta, respondents believed there was a deliberate attempt by government to balance boards with respect to occupational backgrounds and where appropriate to include regional representation, but the inclusion of a mixture of socio-economic levels and political philosophies was thought to be given little consideration with respect to most boards in the province. However, according to the National Commission (1980), no attempt was made by decision makers in the United States to balance boards with respect to any given criteria. More specifically, Thompson (1979:323) found that community college boards were not well represented by "women, young adults, non-caucasian, less well-educated, or low income groups, and those in non-professional occupations." Private boards, Fistler (1982) found, determined independently the extent of representation they felt they needed.

While minor modifications will continue to be made to nomination and selection proceedings, unless there is a major political change or economic crisis, according to public officials, the current process in Alberta was projected to remain relatively unchanged for the next decade. However, if Pitman's (1986) recommendations regarding the governance structure of the Ontario college system are applied, the selection of public board members in that province could be altered substantially as local boards assume responsibility for selection of their own members. Similarly, if the recommendations made by the National Commission (1980) are put into effect, the process used to select American boards will also become more decentralized as local nominating committees assume responsibility for assessing board membership, determining board needs and searching for qualified candidates. Thus, the stable situation predicted for Alberta is in opposition to the changes recommended for board member selection in Ontario and in the United States.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions for the study are based on the methodology and findings discussed earlier in this thesis. They are supported by evidence derived from interviews with public officials, the survey questionnaire involving community college public board members, interviews with public board members in their first term of office, documents and the literature reviewed. The conclusions based on the findings are presented in four categories related to the research questions: (1) nomination and selection procedures; (2) board member perceptions of their selection process; (3) board member background profile; and (4) opinions about the selection process. The conclusions related to methodolgical aspects of the study comprise the final category.

Nomination and Selection Procedures

In Alberta, a search of pertinent documents including the Colleges Act (1985), showed that there are no prescribed legislation or documented procedures to guide the process used to select community college public board members. These findings are consistent with the results of studies conducted regarding the selection of governors in American private and public postsecondary institutions. However, as a result of interviews with public officials and board members, implicit procedures were found to guide nomination and selection proceedings. Based on these findings, the first conclusion of this study is:

1. *There is no prescribed legislation nor official or unofficial documentation to guide the selection process. Implicit procedures guide nomination and selection proceedings.*

There are no restrictions placed by government on the source of nominations. Potential candidates were identified from a variety of sources including the minister, MLAs, board chairmen, opposition MLAs and self-applications. Participation by public board members was usually limited to informal discussions with their chairmen. Community involvement was usually limited to those individuals designated as government contacts. The only formal request from the minister was directed toward MLAs in the immediate vicinity and surrounding region of the colleges.

Selection procedures were found to be more closely centred in government. The minister was the principal actor throughout selection proceedings. He chose the individuals who participated in the process and decided when their involvement was necessary. His personal staff assisted in the assessment of candidates and, in general, the premier, MLAs, board chairmen and referees were consulted during the process. But, it was the minister who ranked the nominees and made recommendations to cabinet where official selections are made. Similarly, the selection of American board members was found by researchers to be handled almost exclusively by state governors. The net effect of these actions is stated in the second conclusion:

2. *Nomination procedures are relatively open but, in general, selection procedures are held very close to government. The minister strongly influences all phases of the selection process.*

Other than Canadian citizenship and Alberta residency, there are no prescribed criteria in the Colleges Act (1985) for board membership. However, over time "implicit" criteria have evolved to identify candidates for office. The nomination phase of the selection process was viewed as a way of identifying people who have demonstrated their ability to handle the job through such means as community involvement and success in their vocation.

On the other hand, final selections were dependent upon more specific criteria. Since appointments are made by the political party currently in office, individuals with a political philosophy in tune with the government were sought. In the United States, researchers found that decisions were based almost exclusively on political criteria. Following an extensive literature review of elite backgrounds in many cultures, Putnam (1976) found that loyalty and reliability were used as criteria in the selection of elites in all political systems.

While political affiliation was the primary selection criterion in Alberta, the minister also selected board members based upon additional criteria. A deliberate attempt was made to balance boards with respect to occupational backgrounds in order to provide each board with a diversity of expertise and skills. Special needs of the colleges such as regional representation were taken into account. These findings led to the following conclusion:

3. *Nomination criteria focus primarily upon general eligibility factors such as competence and demonstrated ability. Final selection criteria address more specific items including political affiliation, contribution to board balance and special needs of individual institutions.*

The process used to select community college public board members is not static, but changes over time. Due to the lack of documented procedures, the minister assigned to the department enjoys considerable latitude with respect to selection proceedings. He chooses who will be allowed to participate in the process and when their input is required. Consequently, as the minister is replaced the process changes accordingly. Both nomination and selection procedures have been altered since the inception of the Colleges Act in 1969.

Originally, advertisements were used to garner nominees for board positions. Due to the volume and poor quality of applicants received, the advertising campaign was terminated approximately ten years after its inception and replaced by the current arrangement. Although the department's participation in the selection of board members was curtailed, it was expanded with regard to the administration of the process. In an attempt to make the volume of information more manageable for cabinet ministers, the format of the material presented to them was modified. Complete resumes and supporting documentation were replaced with summary reports of each candidate. The selection criteria have changed. While the minister attempts to balance the occupational backgrounds of governors, there has been a shift from an emphasis on legal credentials to business expertise. Regional representation has become prominent as well.

In addition, environmental conditions have changed over time. General societal influences including economic, social and education forces affect the process. More specifically, Canadian influences such as expanding provincial control, growing institutional expertise and increasing diversity of demands have an impact on procedures. The individual needs of the colleges within the system also affect the selection process. As a result, the conclusion reached here is:

4. *The process used to select Alberta community college public board members functions as a dynamic political system. As such, the process is not static*

but changes over time in an attempt to respond to shifting environmental influences.

Board Member Perceptions of Their Selection Process

Data collected from board members in their first term of office revealed that they possess considerable knowledge about nomination and selection procedures, as well as, the criteria used in their selections. In varying degrees of specificity, the process described by the majority of appointees closely paralleled that offered by public officials. While the role of political affiliation was not denied by either group, capabilities recognized as a result of community service, previous board positions and/or business activities were also believed to be major considerations. The criteria cited by public officials as those used by government concurred. In contrast, a similar study of Alberta governors conducted almost a decade ago found respondents were unaware of selection procedures and the criteria used. In light of the current data, the following conclusion is drawn:

5. *Board members possess considerable knowledge about nomination and selection procedures, as well as, the criteria used in their selections.*

Board Member Background Profile

In general, board members represent a fairly uniform demographic profile. They are middle-aged, well-educated, financially successful, professional males who are long-time residents of the province and possess the same political philosophy as the party in office. These findings are consistent with those in other studies conducted in Canada and the United States in the past two decades. Thus, the following conclusion is stated:

6. *Alberta community college public board members present a stereotypic demographic profile.*

In chapters 5 and 6 the backgrounds of board members surveyed and interviewed, respectively, were discussed. A review of governor experiences showed that all board members had been involved in some way in the various sectors of public and/or community life. Most participated in party politics either in an administrative capacity or as campaign workers. They had not previously served on school district or other postsecondary governing boards but were active members of boards in non-educational sectors of the community. The majority were heavily involved in community activities as indicated by their participation in service and sports clubs, fund raising groups, civic advisory, business, professional, school and church organizations. These findings led to the following conclusion:

7. *Public members are drawn from an active sector of their respective communities. Involvement in community activities and party politics is common among public governors.*

As described in Chapters 4, according to public officials, the criteria used in the selection of board members included, in order of priority, political affiliation, contribution to board balance, special institutional needs, demonstrated abilities and personal characteristics.

All board members in their first term of office acknowledged the importance of balancing boards in terms of occupational backgrounds and expertise. The emphasis government has placed on business credentials was also substantiated as the majority of board members surveyed were involved in business as determined by management, sales and professional occupations. Most of the questionnaire respondents rated items related to demonstrated capabilities in business and community affairs as important board member characteristics. Similarly, all of the board members interviewed considered demonstrated capabilities to be one of the most important characteristics leading to their selection. In addition, over half of these respondents cited the ability to think independently, interpersonal skills and open-mindedness as important characteristics for boardsmanship, thus lending support to the personal criteria considered desirable by government.

There were some noteworthy discrepancies between the data provided by public officials and those given by board members. The majority of college governors surveyed believed political affiliation to be an unimportant characteristic. They rated interest in higher education, vision to move ahead with new ideas and time to devote to board activity as the three most desirable selection characteristics. Similarly, all of the board members interviewed cited time as an important factor and some mentioned vision. In contrast, few public officials cited these three characteristics as those actually used by government. Based on these findings, the eighth conclusion of this study is:

8. *In general, the characteristics deemed important for boardsmanship by college governors are those used by government to identify successful candidates including contribution to board balance, demonstrated abilities and personal characteristics.*

Opinions About the Selection Process

The terms used by public officials to describe the overall selection process reflected the lack of prescribed legislation and documented procedures and the subsequent latitude the minister has with respect to the selection proceedings. Since most actions are guided by "implicit" procedures, the vast majority of officials agreed that in many respects the process was informal, unstructured and open to the minister's discretion. Board members, in turn, expressed agreement with the use of these descriptors. These results were consistent with those found in American studies.

The informality, lack of structure and openness associated with the process were perceived by both public officials and board members to comprise the major strength of the current selection process. The responses given by the two groups were very similar in nature. Flexibility and openness were cited as the major advantages as they provided the freedom for the minister to make decisions on diverse appointments and thus, afforded the opportunity to build more balanced boards based upon the needs of individual colleges. In this way, the process could be adapted to accommodate changes in the environment, as well as, those within the system itself. The lack of prescribed criteria added to the flexibility and openness of the process. The use of what was termed "artificial criteria" was thought to place limits on the process as people who did not fit into predesignated slots would be excluded.

On the other hand, this degree of freedom was not without its perceived disadvantages. The most common concern expressed by the two cohorts focused upon the potential for abuse. The lack of structure provided the opportunity for board appointments to be used exclusively for patronage purposes. Since there are no rules, regulations or even guidelines, the commitment and integrity of the minister and MLAs were seen by respondents to play a prominent role in selection proceedings. American research studies produced similar results. These findings led to the following conclusion:

9. *The current selection process is informal, unstructured and subject to the minister's discretion. The flexibility attributed to current nomination and selection proceedings is both a major advantage and a major disadvantage of the selection process.*

Although public officials and board members expressed mainly favourable opinions in relation to current selection procedures, they also suggested improvements. In order to minimize the potential for abuse, some degree of structure was recommended to guide the proceedings. In order to avoid delays in filling board vacancies, both groups felt procedures should be incorporated to ensure boards have full membership at all times. Guidelines to increase public awareness regarding board vacancies were suggested. Most governors and some public officials believed boards should be more formally involved in selection procedures, especially in regard to identifying the needs of the college and community and in identifying criteria. Others felt board chairmen and college presidents should be consulted throughout all phases of the process including final selections rather than allowing the minister the freedom to include "those he wants when he wants."

Interestingly, both groups of respondents indicated the importance of some sort of feedback cycle to determine the success of current selection procedures and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of boards. In other words, some means of assessing the present performance of board members was recommended before new members were appointed. In this way, new appointments could be used to fill in the perceived gaps in skills and expertise. Neither group was suggesting the incorporation of "tight" rules or regulations, nor a formal system of evaluation, but rather some sort of broad guidelines to assist in the development of a more effective means of identifying the best possible people to serve on community college boards. Thus, as a result of these suggestions, the following conclusion is stated:

10. *Board members and public officials are very concerned about the potential for abuse afforded by the lack of structure surrounding the current selection process.*

Board members who were interviewed considered the issue of community representation almost exclusively in terms of occupational diversity and believed government did likewise. While they felt there was a deliberate attempt by government to diversify and avoid duplication of backgrounds of college governors, the inclusion of a mixture of socio-economic levels and political philosophies was thought to be given little consideration with respect to most boards in the province. Public officials substantiated this perspective. According to the results of American studies, there was no attempt by decision makers to balance boards with respect to any given criteria. As a result of their research in relation to the recruitment of political elites, Almond and Powell (1978:102) found that "the operation of both motivation and selection virtually ensures that leaders will not be randomly representative of the general society." Based on these findings, the next conclusion of this study is:

> 11. *Community representation on college boards is viewed almost exclusively in terms of occupational diversity with little effort by government to make boards representative of the general public in terms of socio-economic levels and political ideologies.*

In general, all three groups of respondents were satisfied with the current selection process. Public board members opposed the use of provincial, local and government department nomination committees. These results contrasted with those of the American National Commission on College and University Selection (1980) where the establishment of governor appointed nominating committees was highly recommended.

Nearly half of the questionnaire respondents also rejected a combination of appointed and elected members and the majority disagreed with school trustee representation. Conversely, respondents in a British Columbia study displayed strong support for school board representation on college boards.

In particular, strong opposition was expressed by all three groups of respondents with respect to the elective alternative. While elections were perceived to ameliorate candidate accessibility difficulties, the disadvantages, including expense, increased politicization, uncontrolled board membership in terms of quality and expertise of candidates, constituency and funding concerns were thought to clearly outweigh the advantages. The results of other research studies conducted in both Canada and the United States concurred. Thus, the conclusion reached here is:

12. *In general, the current process used to select community college public board members in Alberta is considered to be superior to alternative forms of selection.*

In two other recent studies, substantial changes in selection procedures were predicted. If the recommendations of a study commissioned by the Ontario government are applied, the selection of public board members could be altered substantially as local boards assume responsibility for selection of their own members. Similarly, if the recommendations made in a study conducted by the National Commission (1980) are put into effect, the process used to select American boards will also become more decentralized as local nominating committees assume responsibility for assessing board membership, determining board needs and searching for qualified candidates.

However, the situation in Alberta was predicted by public officials to remain relatively stable. While minor modifications will continue to be made to nomination and selection proceedings in Alberta, unless there is a major political change or economic crisis, the current process was projected to remain relatively unchanged for the next decade. Some alterations to selection criteria were predicted as colleges become more involved in fund raising activities and the need for some kind of vision to guide colleges through changing environmental conditions receives increased attention. Thus, the following conclusion regarding the findings of this study is:

13. *Minor modifications will continue to be made to nomination and selection proceedings in Alberta, but unless there is a major political change or economic crisis, the current selection process will remain relatively unchanged for the next decade.*

As a result of the interviews, reflections, discussions and further reading, the researcher gained many valuable insights with respect to the people appointed by the current selection process. The lack of structure surrounding nomination and selection procedures does not seem to have led to an abuse of the selection process. While most of the appointees are members of the current political party in office, their community service and/or occupational backgrounds clearly displayed their qualifications for board membership.

The individuals interviewed for the purposes of this study seemed to be deeply concerned about the selection procedures currently used and were willing not only to identify problems with the process, but to offer potential solutions. Most spoke freely about the political overtones of the process. Throughout the interviews, they displayed a strong sense of community responsibility and appeared committed to the development of their respective institutions. Their willingness to cooperate with the research and their interest in the results of the study served to demonstrate their desire not only to become more knowledgeable about their selection process, but also to become more informed about issues related to college governance in general. Therefore, in the experiences of this researcher, the following conclusion is offered:

> *14. The lack of structure surrounding the selection process does not appear to have had an effect on the quality, in terms of background credentials, of people selected for board membership. In general, they appear to be dedicated individuals, deeply committed to the development of their respective institutions.*

Methodological Aspects of the Study

The literature did not provide the detailed conceptual model required to guide this study. By incorporating the elements from three distinct conceptual schemes, a framework termed a dynamic political system or DPS model was designed to identify the major components of the study and to guide the research. The four major components of this study were: the environment surrounding the DPS, nomination and selection procedures which took place within the DPS and the products of the DPS termed outputs. This study focused primarily upon the last three components. To set the context for the study, the environment was described in terms of the professional literature. With respect to the five research questions stated earlier in the chapter, the first three were designed to determine nomination and selection procedures, the fourth to determine the kind of outputs the DPS produced and the final question served to provide feedback information for the DPS. Based on the experience of the researcher, the following conclusion applies to the use of the model:

> *15. The DPS model was a useful way of conceptualizing the selection process. First, it reduced the apparent complexity of the process by identifying the major components of the study. Second, it showed the relationship of the research questions to the conceptual framework. Third, it provided direction for the investigation.*

To schematically represent the DPS model, an analogy was developed between the biological world and the selection process. This analogy illustrated the dynamic nature of the selection process and showed that the process continually evolves in response to changing environmental demands and support. The inclusion of a feedback loop indicated that the outputs of the DPS interact with the environment and affect the inputs of the system. As the study evolved, several weaknesses in the original schematic representation of the DPS model became apparent. The major components of the conceptual framework were not clear from this schematic. The relationship of the research questions to the DPS model was not easily discernable. The difference between nomination and selection criteria was not shown. Similarly, there was no indication of the possibility that nomination and selection procedures involved different actors. Thus, while maintaining the biological analogy, the original schematic was modified to more closely reflect the dynamics of the selection process. The incorporation of different graphic symbols and a reordering of the components served to overcome the weaknesses of the original schematic. The following conclusions apply to the utility of the DPS model:

16. *A major strength of the schematic representation of the DPS model relates to the dynamic nature of the selection process. It shows that the process continually evolves in response to changing environmental demands and support.*
17. *The modified schematic representation of the DPS model is a more useful, appropriate and heuristic model than the original schematic.*

IMPLICATIONS

The implications for this study are presented in two categories. The first consists of implications for those involved in the the selection process. The second set of implications is intended for those interested in research in the fields related to the politics of education, postsecondary governance or, more specifically, governing boards.

Implications for Practice

If the description of the selection process of community college public board members developed in this study is accurate, there are several implications for those involved in the process. The first implication is for those with responsibility for designing the structures and procedures by which the process functions, namely government. The view of the selection process developed in this study implies that while it is necessary to have flexible procedures in order to respond to shifting environmental demands and accommodate the needs of diverse institutions, efforts should be made to design a process that incorporates more structure. Implicit procedures have already evolved to guide the process. Planning for the development of guidelines then becomes an ongoing process which attempts to maintain the flexibility to adapt to changing conditions, but provides sufficient structure to acquaint actors with the roles they are expected and/or allowed to perform. Thus, the first implication for practice is:

1. *Government should design a selection process that incorporates more structure. The design should recognize the dynamic nature of the selection process and specify only in general terms what procedures should be adopted and who should participate.*

The nature of the process also has implications for the actors or authorities in terms of how they participate in the DPS. The conclusion that the process is not static, but changes over time to include and exclude actors indicates that the participation of actors is dependent upon the wishes of the minister who holds ultimate control of selection proceedings. He decides who, when and to what degree individuals will be involved. The minister may misconstrue the situation, based upon the information available to him, choose the wrong participants and be less effective in his attempts to make the best possible appointments. The actors or authorities should be sensitive to the dynamics and complexities of each situation and should choose their behavior accordingly. For instance, if the minister is conducting background checks of candidates for a specific board and local MLAs have not been consulted, MLAs should be familiar enough with the proceedings to know how and when to initiate contact with the minister. The following implication is derived from this discussion:

2. *The prospective participants including MLAs and board chairmen should be aware of the latitude of ministerial action and should be sensitive to the elements in the selection process that would alert them to the most*

appropriate behavior.

The study also pointed out the potential contribution of individuals in the immediate environment surrounding the DPS. The minister and other actors in the process should consider the options for involving individuals or groups from the environment. For instance, advertisements were recommended as one way to include public participation. An increased and more formal role for board members was also suggested. As illustrated by the findings of the study, the lack of guidelines and the subsequent degree of latitude enjoyed by the minister presents the potential for abuse. Board appointments could be used exclusively for patronage purposes. Providing the opportunity for individuals from the community and members of the boards to participate in the selection of their college governors could improve the effectiveness of governing boards. This implies that:

3. *Government should be aware of the possible contribution of individuals and groups in the environment to the selection process and should look at ways of increasing their involvement.*

College governors should find this study useful as well. Although most were familiar with selection proceedings, the findings should serve to further their understanding of their selection process. They offered many opinions about nomination and selection procedures and the accompanying criteria. Using the data provided in this study, board members could compare their opinions regarding selected aspects of the appointment process with those of their colleagues throughout the province, as well as, with public officials who are or have been directly involved in the process. These comparisons may assist them in determining the role they feel they should play in the selection of new members. This implies that:

4. *College governors should communicate their opinions about the selection process to government. This information may serve to encourage*

government to modify the process to incorporate board member suggestions in order to improve nomination and selection procedures.

Both government and board members should find the findings related to criteria valuable. The comparisions of the criteria used in selections versus the characteristics deemed by governors to be important for boardsmanship imply that while board members are in general agreement with the criteria applied by government, they feel some significant factors have been overlooked in the final selection of candidates. Perhaps, based on these findings, both groups should re-evaluate their positions and discuss modifications. As recommended by public officials and college governors,

5. *Due to their proximity to the community and the institution, board members should be more involved in identifying the criteria for selection.*

To this point, the implications for practice have focused upon how to improve the selection process. But, the findings of this study can also be used to derive implications in reference to how to conceptualize or think differently with respect to nomination and selection procedures. The major strength of the conceptual framework designed to guide this research was the dynamic nature of the DPS model. As environmental demands and support change, the model has the ability to change accordingly. The lack of prescribed proceedings has given the minister the freedom to determine who will participate in the process, when their involvement is required and what criteria will be used to choose members. The dynamic nature of the DPS model allows for the accommodation of these changes as well. The major theme running through this discussion is that the selection process cannot be thought of as a static set of procedures. It cannot be considered in isolation from the other social systems with which it interacts. As Easton (1966:4) explained, "It is an open system, subject to influences from outside its own perimeter." In order to conceptualize the process a flexible mindset must be adopted. Thus, the findings of this study imply that:

6. *The selection process cannot be thought of as a static set of procedures. It must be considered as a dynamic process, capable of shifting over time in an attempt to adjust to changing external and internal variables. In order to conceptualize the process a flexible mindset must be adopted.*

The findings of this study can also be used to reflect more deeply in terms of the governance of postsecondary institutions in general. The term governance is defined "as the structures and processes of decision making" (Carnegie Commission, 1973:vii). The processes of decision making in government appear to be highly centralized in that government places considerable latitude in the hands of a select group of individuals, namely cabinet. Selected ministers are given considerable freedom to make decisions in certain areas of the political and social enterprise. There is little prescribed legislation or documentation to guide decision making processes in these areas resulting in the use of implicit procedures and criteria. As the ministers are replaced, decision-making processes change accordingly. This implies that:

7. *In general, the effectiveness of postsecondary governance is dependent to a large extent on the integrity and expertise of a single individual who has the freedom to decide how selection decisions will be made and who will participate.*

Implications For Research

The findings of the study and the conclusions stated earlier in this chapter provide the basis for suggestions for further research related to board member selection and performance. The implications for research are presented in three categories: (1) general suggestions for modifications of the study while maintaining a similar focus; (2) propositions that grow out of the study but extend beyond the current focus; and (3) specific areas for further research.

The following suggestions could expand the findings of this study and test the degree of applicability of the findings to other settings while maintaining a similar focus by modifying the way the study was conducted. The sample used in this study limited the generalizability of the results to the selection of community college public board members in Alberta. In order to test the generalizability of the results to a broader group, this study could be expanded to include a more comprehensive survey such as a nation wide survey of the selection processes of community college public board members. In addition, in order to determine whether the results of the study could be reproduced, it may be useful to replicate the study with public board members from technical institutes and universities within Alberta, as well as, from other provinces. The accuracy of the conclusions could be tested against other studies of the selection process in the future. Interview data were collected from governors in their first term of office. It may also be useful to replicate this study to include longer standing board members. Due to their greater experience, they may be able to add valuable insights.

Propositions are useful in theory building and lead to further research. The following propositions were generated from this research and the related literature and suggest specific insights about the selection process.

Proposition 1: *The nature of the selection process is dependent upon the government official assigned the responsibility at a particular time.*

Proposition 2: *As the number of participants in the selection process decreases, the degree of government control increases accordingly.*

Proposition 3: *A decrease in the number of interactions between the DPS, its outputs and the environment increases the degree of alienation and confrontation between actors in the DPS and their outputs and between those in the DPS and the environment.*

Proposition 4: *A more structured selection process would decrease the potential for abuse and improve communication channels among prospective* *participants.*

Proposition 5: *Increased public participation in the selection process would increase the pool of qualified candidates.*

Proposition 6: *A diversity of board member backgrounds in terms of talents and expertise would improve the effectiveness of governing boards.*

Some specific areas for further research that are intended to advance knowledge related to board member selection and performance are stated below.

The environment was one of the major components of the conceptual framework designed to guide this research. To set the context for the study, the environment was described in terms of the professional literature. Therefore, the question remains:

1. *What factors in the external environment have an effect upon the selection process and how do they effect the process?*

The minister was found to play a prominent role throughout all phases of the selection process. He possessed the freedom to decide who and when individuals would be allowed to participate in the selection process and what criteria would be used to determine successful candidates. As a result, the question posed here is:

2. *What effect, if any, does the individual minister's personality, education, experience and/or management style have on the actual procedures and criteria used?*

Public officials and board members both recommended that board members be more involved in the selection process. Pitman (1986) suggested board members be given the responsibility for the selection of their own members. This leads to the query:

3. *What effect, if any, does the increased participation by board members in the selection of their own members have on the diversity and effectiveness of governing boards?*

The conceptual framework designed for this study proved useful for the study of the process used to select community college public board members. It reduced the apparent complexity of the process by identifying the major components of the study, showed the relationship of the research questions to the conceptual framework and provided direction for the investigation. The schematic representation of the DPS model was able to be modified to include a different set of component parts and still retain the essential dynamic nature of the process. To determine the further utility of this model the following question is posed:

4. *How appropriate is the DPS model for the analysis of selection processes in other parts of the social and political enterprise and, hence, for establishing a base from which comparative analyses may be conducted?*

Based on the work of Pitkin (1967), Mann (1977:79) identified four ways through which representation occurs including formalistic, descriptive, symbolic and substantive. Worth (1986b:5) believed that representation by means of the first three forms presents little difficulty for board members, but the fourth form gives rise to some problems. Alberta community college boards are composed of both institutional members and public members. Thus,

5. *If this study were replicated to examine the process used to select institutional members, to the extent these processes are different, does that have implications on the representational style employed?*

In a model adopted from Cistone (1975:47), Worth (1986a:3) depicted five stages in the development of college board members including eligibility, selection, role learning, role refinement and role mastery. This study was concerned with the first two stages. In order to provide a more complete, comprehensive picture of the development of board members, the remaining three stages should be examined. This leads to a final question:

6. *What is the relationship between college board member recruitment, role socialization and performance?*

Future research which seeks to provide answers to the questions posed will contribute to a greater understanding of the nature of board member selection in higher education, as well as, other areas of the political and social enterprise and improve the general body of knowledge related to postsecondary governance.

A statement made over fifty years ago by Elliot, Chambers, and Ashbrook (1935:xi) in reference to American university governing boards seems appropriate for concluding this study of Alberta community college boards:

> ***After all has been presented and argued, it may be safely asserted that a wholly dependable legal formula for constituting these boards has not yet been made.***

Nevertheless, this study has made several contributions with respect to the selection of public board members. The conceptual framework designed to guide the collection and analysis of data presented a unique approach to the recruitment of political elites. In an Alberta context, the research served to clarify and document the appointment process, as well as, raise the consciousness of both public officials and board members regarding selection procedures. While the success of the current process was affirmed, ways to further enhance procedures were identified. In a broader context, the study not only helped to fill a notable gap in higher education research related to board member selection, but it also contributed to an understanding of a process deemed vital by both government and scholars, yet rarely investigated by either group.

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

PART I: BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

This section identifies personal and professional background characteristics. Please check the most appropriate response for each item.

1. **Gender:**

___ Female ___ Male

2. **Age at last birthday:**

___ 29 or under
___ 30 to 39
___ 40 to 49
___ 50 to 59
___ 60 to 69
___ 70 or over

3. **How long have you resided in this province?**

___ Less than four years
___ At least four, but less than eight
___ At least eight, but less than twelve
___ Twelve years or more

4. **Are the head office of this institution and your home residence in the same city or town?**

___ Yes ___ No

5. **If your home and the head office are NOT in the same city or town, how many kilometres separate them?**

____

6. **Please estimate your total family income last year. Consider annual income from all sources before taxes.**

___ Less than $20,000
___ $20,000 to $29,999
___ $30,000 to $49,999
___ $50,000 to $74,999
___ $75,000 to $99,999
___ $100,000 or more

7. **Which of the following best describes your political ideology or orientation?**

___ Activist
___ Conservative
___ Liberal
___ Moderate

8. **What is your provincial political party preference?**

___ Liberal
___ NDP
___ Progressive Conservative
___ Social Credit
___ Other

9. **Please indicate the highest level of formal education you have. (i.e., mark only ONE alternative.)**

___ Did not complete secondary school
___ Graduated from secondary school
___ Graduated from college or technical institute
___ Graduated from university
___ Completed a postgraduate degree

10. **Please indicate the extent of your involvement in THIS institution.**

___ I have not taken any courses here
___ I have taken at least one course
___ I have completed a program
___ I have been employed at this institution

11. **How long have you been a member of the board of THIS institution?**

___ Less than one year
___ One year
___ Two to three years
___ Four to six years
___ Seven to nine years
___ Ten or more years

12. **Have you held public office prior to your appointment to THIS governing board? (Check all that apply.)**

___ Yes, municipal level
___ Yes, federal level
___ Yes, provincial level
___ No

13. **Do you aspire to hold public office? (Check all that apply.)**

___ Yes, municipal level
___ Yes, federal level
___ Yes, provincial level
___ No

14. **What has been the nature of your involvement in party politics? (Check all that apply.)**

___ Candidate for office
___ Campaign manager
___ Executive officer
___ Party member
___ No involvement

15. What is the extent of your familiarity with the educational periodicals listed below. Use the key below in responding.

1 = Read regularly
2 = Read but not regularly
3 = Have read only several articles from this periodical
4 = Am familiar with this periodical but have never read it
5 = Am not familiar with this periodical

	1	2	3	4	5
AAUC Bulletin	___	___	___	___	___
AGB Reports	___	___	___	___	___
ACCT Trustee Quarterly	___	___	___	___	___
Canadian Journal of Higher Education	___	___	___	___	___
Change	___	___	___	___	___
Chronicle of Higher Education	___	___	___	___	___
College and University Business	___	___	___	___	___
College Canada	___	___	___	___	___
College Management	___	___	___	___	___
Community and Junior College Journal	___	___	___	___	___
Community College Review	___	___	___	___	___
Journal of Higher Education	___	___	___	___	___
New Directions for Community Colleges	___	___	___	___	___
New Directions for Higher Education	___	___	___	___	___
Other (please specify: ______________________)	___	___	___	___	___

16. Indicate the ONE category which best describes your primary occupation. (If retired, indicate your former occupation.)

___ Artist, entertainer, athlete
___ Clerical (e.g., secretary, bookkeeper, bank teller, clerk)
___ Clergy or religious order
___ Farm owner or farm manager
___ Government official or administrator (including hospital and educational administrator)
___ Health professional (e.g., dentist, nurse, pharmacist, physician, veterinarian)
___ Homemaker
___ Labourer
___ Lawyer, judge, notary
___ Machine operator (e.g., factory or metal worker, crane operator)
___ Manager, owner of a small business
___ Manager, owner of a medium size business, middle management
___ Manager, owner or executive in a large organization (e.g., industry, bank, large department store)
___ Paraprofessional (e.g., computer programmer, draftsman, studio operator, surveyer, technician)
___ Physical science professional (e.g., architect, biologist, engineer, physicist)
___ Protective service (e.g., fire fighter, police, armed forces)
___ Sales (e.g., insurance, real estate, advertising)
___ Service worker (e.g., taxi driver, hairdresser, waitress, janitor)
___ Skilled craftsman (e.g., carpenter, electrician, machinist, mechanic, plumber, TV repairman)
___ Social science professional (e.g., economist, psychologist, social worker)
___ Student
___ Teaching professional (e.g., elementary, secondary, postsecondary)
___ Other (Please specify: ____)

17. What community activities were you engaged in during the past two years? Please select more than one response if applicable.

___ Service Club
___ Hospital board
___ Civic advisory board
___ Business and professional group
___ School board
___ Church organization
___ Chamber of commerce
___ Other (Please specify: ____________________)
___ None

18. If you have been a member of a local school district board during the past 10 years, please indicate how long you served?

___ Less than one year
___ One year
___ Two to three years
___ Four to six years
___ Seven to nine years
___ Ten or more years

19. On how many college or university governing boards have you PREVIOUSLY served exclusive of your present board membership(s)?

___ None
___ One
___ Two
___ Three
___ Four or more

20. Exclusive of postsecondary governing and school district boards, of how many other boards have you been a member over the past five years (e.g., provincial, corporation, municipal, church, cultural affairs, scouts, community service, etc.)?

___ None
___ One
___ Two
___ Three
___ Four
___ Five or more

21. Please indicate the actual and preferred number of persons on your board.

___ Actual
___ Preferred

22. Please indicate the actual and preferred length of your term of office on the board.

___ Actual
___ Preferred

Please add any comments you may wish to make.

____

____

____

PART IV: BOARD SELECTION

In this section, you are asked to reflect upon the selection of board members. Please check the most appropriate response for each item.

1. How did you come to be a member of THIS governing board?

___ Appointed by the Lieutenant governor as a lay member at large
___ Appointed by the Board of Regents
___ Appointed as a member of the senate
___ Appointed as a representative of the alumni
___ Appointed as the president of the institution
___ Appointed as a representative of the faculty
___ Appointed as a representative of the nonacademic support staff
___ Appointed as a representative of the students
___ Other (Please specify: ______________________________)

2. Who nominated you for membership on THIS governing board?

___ Current local MLA
___ Former local MLA
___ Former member of THIS governing board
___ Current member of THIS governing board
___ Nomination not required - - ex officio (president)
___ Colleague (student, faculty, nonacademic support staff)
___ Other (Please specify: ____________________)
___ Do not know

3. Were you seeking a position on THIS governing board?

___ Yes ___ No

4. Was a specific reason(s) given for inviting you to become a member of THIS governing board?

___ Yes ___ No

If yes, please specify:

____

____

____

5. To what degree are you satisfied with the selection process involving public members?

___ Strongly satisfied
___ Satisfied
___ Undecided
___ Dissatisfied
___ Strongly dissatisfied

Please check the appropriate space to indicate the extent of your agreement with each of the following statements regarding the selection and composition of postsecondary governing boards.

	Strongly Agree SA	Agree A	Undecided U	Disagree D	Strongly Disagree SD
6. Board members should be elected by local constituencies.	___	___	___	___	___
7. Board members should be appointed by the government.	___	___	___	___	___
8. Some members should be elected and others appointed.	___	___	___	___	___
9. School trustees should represent local districts on boards.	___	___	___	___	___
10. The president should be a voting member of the board.	___	___	___	___	___
11. The faculty should be represented on boards.	___	___	___	___	___
12. Nonacademic support staff should be represented on boards.	___	___	___	___	___
13. Students should be represented on boards.	___	___	___	___	___
14. Alumni should be represented on boards.	___	___	___	___	___
15. A local nomination committee should submit nominations for appointment to the minister.	___	___	___	___	___
16. A provincial nomination committee should submit nominations for appointment to the Minister.	___	___	___	___	___
17. A government departmental committee should submit nominations for appointment to the Minister.	___	___	___	___	___

Please add any comments you may wish to make.

____

____

____

How important would you regard the following criteria in selecting board members?

	Very Important VI	Important I	Unimportant U	Undesirable U	Highly Undesirable HU
18. Stature in community					
19. Stature in chosen vocation or occupation					
20. Interest in higher education					
21. Generally known to other board members					
22. Time to devote to board activity					
23. Experience in education					
24. Involvement in community affairs					
25. Respect for the teaching profession					
26. Involvement in party politics					
27. Business knowledge					
28. Association with spouse					
29. A middle-of-the-road point of view					
30. Political affiliations					
31. Educational background					
32. Strong views about most matters					
33. Business connections					
34. Alumnus of the institution					
35. Ability to make financial contributions					
36. Vision to move ahead with new ideas					

37. Other (Please specify: ______________________________)

38. From the above listing of selection criteria identify a maximum of five responses which you believe were the most important in your selection to serve on THIS board.

__________ __________ __________ __________ __________

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Nomination Procedures

1. What is the process by which public board members are nominated for board membership?
    - (a) Who is eligible to nominate candidates?
    - (b) Who is eligible to be nominated?
    - (c) What guidelines exist for nomination procedures?
    - (d) How are board vacancies made known to the public?
    - (e) Where do nominations originate?
    - (f) What procedures are followed in the nomination process?
    - (g) Who is involved in the nomination process?
    - (h) What criteria are used to nominate candidates?
    - (i) How many nominations are required for each vacancy?
    - (j) What type of documentation is required to accompany nominations?

Selection Procedures

2. What is the process by which public board members are selected for board membership?
    - (a) What guidelines exist for selection procedures?
    - (b) What procedures are followed in the selection process?
    - (c) Who is involved in the selection process?
    - (d) What is the role of cabinet in the selection process?

(e) What criteria are used in the selection process?

(f) Is there an attempt by decision makers to balance boards with respect to age, sex and occupational backgrounds? Explain.

(g) What reasons or explanations are provided for the particular decisions made by the individuals involved in the process?

(h) What time frame does the described process encompass?

(i) How consistent are the procedures from year to year? from college to college?

(j) Are decision makers required to explain the reasons for their selections? If so, to whom, in what format and to what degree?

OPINIONS ABOUT THE SELECTION PROCESS

3. What terms would you use to describe the selection process?

4. The process has been described by other respondents in the study as informal, unstructured and open to the minister's discretion.

   (a) Do you agree with these descriptors? Explain.

   (b) What are the advantages of having such a process?

   (c) What are the disadvantages of having such a process?

5. How could the current selection process be improved?

6. What do you believe will happen to the current selection process within the next ten years?

7. Elections have been identified as the most common alternative to the current selection process by other respondents in the study.
   (a) What are the advantages of this form of selection?
   (b) What are the disadvantages of this form of selection?

APPENDIX C

BOARD MEMBER INTERVIEW GUIDE

BOARD MEMBER INTERVIEW GUIDE

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Nomination Procedures

1. Who do you believe nominated you for board membership?

2. What nomination procedures do you believe were followed?

Selection Procedures

3. What selection procedures do you believe were followed?

4. What individuals do you believe were involved in your selection?

5. What criteria do you believe led to your selection?

OPINIONS ABOUT THE SELECTION PROCESS

6. Do you believe it is important for board members to know how they were selected?

7. What characteristics do you feel are important in the selection of governing board members?

8. Do you believe there is an attempt by government to make boards representative of their communities? If so, in what ways?

9. The selection process has been described by other respondents in the study as informal, unstructured and open to the minister's discretion.
    (a) Do you agree with these descriptors? Explain.
    (b) What are the advantages of having such a process?
    (c) What the disadvantages of having such a process?

10. How could the current selection process be improved?

11. Elections have been identified as the most common alternative to the current selection process by other respondents in the study.
    (a) What are the advantages of this form of selection?
    (b) What are the disadvantages of this form of selection?

APPENDIX D

CODING CATEGORIES

CODING CATEGORIES
FOR INTERVIEWS WITH PUBLIC OFFICIALS

A. THE SELECTION PROCESS

1. Nomination Procedures
    - (a) the process
    - (b) the individuals involved
    - (c) criteria
    - (d) documentation

2. Selection Procedures
    - (a) the process
    - (b) the individuals involved
    - (c) criteria
    - (d) role of cabinet
    - (e) board balance
    - (f) time frame
    - (g) documentation

B. OPINIONS ABOUT THE SELECTION PROCESS

1. Process Descriptors
   - (a) terms used
   - (b) advantages of such a process
   - (c) disadvantages of such a process

2. Improvements
   - (a) nomination procedures
   - (b) selection procedures

3. Elections
   - (a) advantages
   - (b) disadvantages

4. Future Projections

CODING CATEGORIES
FOR BOARD MEMBER INTERVIEWS

A. THE SELECTION PROCESS

1. Nomination Procedures
    - (a) the process
    - (b) individuals involved
    - (c) criteria

2. Selection Procedures
    - (a) the process
    - (b) individuals involved
    - (c) criteria

B. OPINIONS ABOUT THE SELECTION PROCESS

1. Importance of Information Related to Their Selection

2. Community Representation

3. Process Descriptors
    - (a) terms used
    - (b) advantages of such a process
    - (c) disadvantages of such a process

4. Improvements
    - (a) nomination procedures
    - (b) selection procedures

5. Elections
    - (a) advantages
    - (b) disadvantages

APPENDIX E

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BOARD MEMBERS

7 vacancies reported on colleges' boards

The Alberta Colleges Commission needs seven people to fill vacancies, coming open July 1, on community college boards of governors.

The commission reports that the boards of Grant MacEwan Community College, Edmonton, and Lethbridge Community College will have two vacancies each.

There will be one vacancy on each of the following boards: Red Deer College, Mount Royal College, Calgary, and Medicine Hat College.

Advanced Education Minister James Foster invites the public to nominate persons to each of these boards. Those appointed will be chosen from the nominees.

The deadline for nominations is April 8. Nominations should be forwarded to colleges commission chairman Dr. Henry Kolesar at Suite 600, Devonian Building, 11160 Jasper Ave., Edmonton.

Note: This has been retyped from microfiche due to poor quality of original.

APPENDIX F

MEMO FROM THE MINISTER

Alberta MEMORANDU
ADVANCED EDUCATION

FROM D. J. RUSSELL,
Deputy Premier
and Minister.

TO

OUR FILE REFERENCE

YOUR FILE REFERENCE

DATE

TELEPHONE

SUBJECT BOARD OF GOVERNORS.

One vacancy will exist on the Board of Governors of the
____
______________ will complete his second term on
______________ and is not eligible for reappointment.

I would appreciate your recommendation of one or more suitable individuals for this position. Please enclose with each nomination a brief profile providing such information as:

1. occupation
2. previous elected positions
3. previous public or community service
4. any other pertinent information.

I would appreciate your recommendations by September 30, 1986.

D. J. RUSSELL

APPENDIX G

ORDER IN COUNCIL

Alberta

ORDER IN COUNCIL

APPROVED AND ORDERED,

F. Lynch-Staunton

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

O. C. 3/84

Edmonton, Alberta

January 3, 1984

Upon the recommendation of the Honourable the Minister of Advanced Education, the Lieutenant Governor in Council, pursuant to section 4 of the Colleges Act,

1 terminates the appointment of Anthony Vincent Thibaudeau as a member of the Board of Governors of Grant MacEwan Community College, effective January 4, 1984;

2 appoints John Steffensen as a member of the Board of Governors of Grant MacEwan Community College for a 3-year term, effective January 4, 1984;

3 amends Order in Council numbered O.C. 838/70 by striking out section 1(a) and substituting the following:

> (a) John Steffensen is appointed as a member for a 3-year term, effective January 4, 1984;

ACTING CHAIRMAN

APPENDIX H

FORMAL DOCUMENTATION FROM THE MINISTER

ADVANCED EDUCATION

Office of the Minister

127 Legislature Building, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5K 2B6 403/427-2291

January 15, 1985

Mr. John Uncles
Box 2137
ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE, Alberta
TOM 1TO

Dear Mr. Uncles:

I am pleased to advise you of your appointment to the Red Deer College Board of Governors.

Your appointment, pursuant to the Colleges Act, is effective from January 9, 1985 to January 8, 1988. A copy of the Order in Council authorizing the appointment is enclosed. As well, a document entitled "Guidelines for Boards of Governors" is included for your information.

On behalf of the Government of Alberta, I would like to thank you for offering to serve Red Deer College in this important capacity. I look forward to working with you during your term in office.

Yours truly,

Dick Johnston
Minister of Advanced
Education

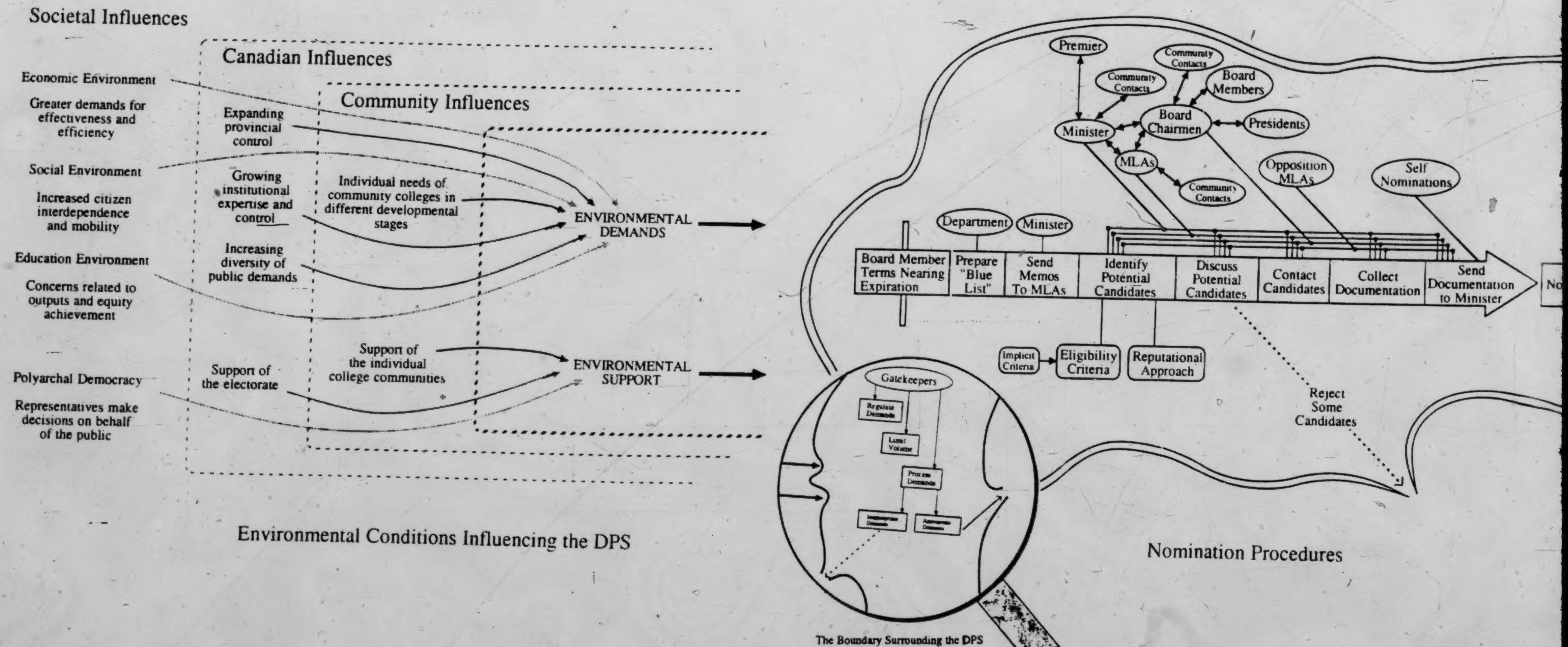
DJ/ak

Attachment

cc: Mr. Ed Makarenko, Chairman
Dr. Ed Luterbach, Acting President
Mr. James McPherson, M.L.A.

APPENDIX I

THE SELECTION PROCESS: A COMPOSITE DPS MODEL


Societal Influences
Economic Environment
Greater demands for effectiveness and efficiency
Social Environment
Increased citizen interdependence and mobility
Education Environment
Concerns related to outputs and equity achievement
Polyarchal Democracy
Representatives make decisions on behalf of the public
Canadian Influences
Expanding provincial control
Growing institutional expertise and control
Increasing diversity of public demands
Support of the electorate
Community Influences
Individual needs of community colleges in different developmental stages
Support of the individual college communities
ENVIRONMENTAL DEMANDS
ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORT
Premier
Community Contacts
Community Contacts
Board Members
Minister
Board Chairmen
Presidents
MLAs
Community Contacts
Opposition MLAs
Self Nominations
Department
Minister
Board Member Terms Nearing Expiration
Prepare "Blue List"
Send Memos To MLAs
Identify Potential Candidates
Discuss Potential Candidates
Contact Candidates
Collect Documentation
Send Documentation to Minister
No
Implicit Criteria
Eligibility Criteria
Reputational Approach
Reject Some Candidates
Gatekeepers
Regulate Demands
Limit Volume
Process Demands
Inappropriate Demands
Appropriate Demands

Environmental Conditions Influencing the DPS

The Boundary Surrounding the DPS

Nomination Procedures

Figure 9 THE SELECTION

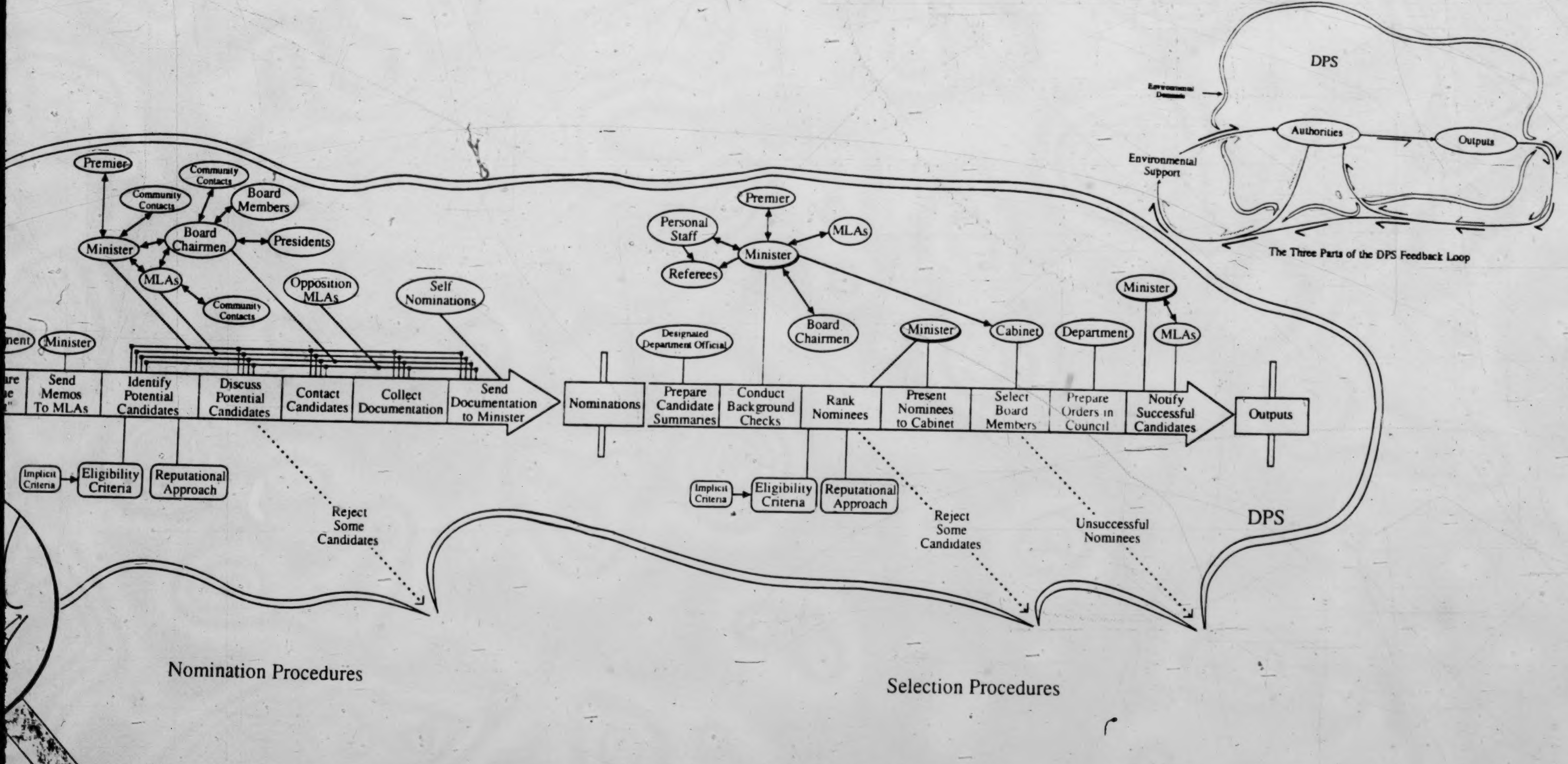

DPS
Environmental Demands
Authorities
Outputs
Environmental Support
The Three Parts of the DPS Feedback Loop
Premier
Community Contacts
Community Contacts
Board Members
Minister
Board Chairmen
Presidents
MLAs
Community Contacts
Opposition MLAs
Self Nominations
nent
Minister
re
e
"
Send Memos To MLAs
Identify Potential Candidates
Discuss Potential Candidates
Contact Candidates
Collect Documentation
Send Documentation to Minister
Implicit Criteria
Eligibility Criteria
Reputational Approach
Reject Some Candidates
Nominations
Premier
Personal Staff
Minister
MLAs
Referees
Board Chairmen
Designated Department Official
Minister
Cabinet
Department
Minister
MLAs
Prepare Candidate Summaries
Conduct Background Checks
Rank Nominees
Present Nominees to Cabinet
Select Board Members
Prepare Orders in Council
Notify Successful Candidates
Outputs
Implicit Criteria
Eligibility Criteria
Reputational Approach
Reject Some Candidates
Unsuccessful Nominees
DPS
Nomination Procedures
Selection Procedures

Figure 9 THE SELECTION PROCESS: A COMPOSITE DPS MODEL